



CLASSIC HOME VIDEO GAMES

1989-1990

A Complete Guide to Sega Genesis,
Neo Geo and TurboGrafx-16 Games

Brett Weiss

Foreword by LEONARD HERMAN

Classic Home Video Games,
1989–1990

ALSO BY BRETT WEISS

Classic Home Video Games, 1985–1988:
A Complete Reference Guide (McFarland, 2009)

Classic Home Video Games, 1972–1984:
A Complete Reference Guide (McFarland, 2007)

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*A Complete Guide to
Sega Genesis, Neo Geo and
TurboGrafx-16 Games*

BRETT WEISS

Foreword by LEONARD HERMAN



McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
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To everyone who was writing about classic video games
before it was cool to write about classic video games:
Al Backiel, Chris Cavanaugh, Jeff Cooper, Tim Duarte, Earl Green,
John Hardie, Leonard Herman, Sean Kelly, Rob O'Hara,
Kevin Oleniacz, Russ Perry, Jr., Joe Santulli, and Scott Stilphen.

This includes *Electronic Games* magazine co-founders
Bill Kunkel, Arnie Katz, and Joyce Worley, who paved the
way for video game journalism and who were writing about
classic games long before they were considered classics.

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Special thanks also to my parents, Perry and Jo Weiss, who gave me a roof over my head, three squares, and the freedom and flexibility to form my own thoughts and opinions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

Foreword by Leonard Herman 1

Preface 3

Neo Geo 7

Sega Genesis 36

TurboGrafx-16 251

Appendix I. Neo Geo CD 285

Appendix II. Sega CD 288

Appendix III. Sega 32X 293

Appendix IV. TurboGrafx-CD 295

Appendix V. Atari Lynx 297

Appendix VI. Nintendo Game Boy 299

Glossary 311

Bibliography 323

Index 325

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FOREWORD

by Leonard Herman

Back in the prehistoric era of 1981, I came up with a great idea for a book. At the time there were so many games available for the Atari 2600 that it was difficult to tell them apart. How about if there was a book that described every game that was available for the system?

And so was born *ABC to the VCS: A Directory of Software for the Atari 2600*. It took me about a year to compile all of the titles that were available and write descriptions of them. And then I separated the book into chapters consisting of similar games. It was a great book, but there was one problem with it. By the time I completed it, new games were available. And so I set out to include them also, knowing full well that new ones would always be available. And with the knowledge that there was a lag time in publishing, the time between when a book was completed and when it was actually published, I knew full well that that book would be obsolete by its release.

However, what I didn't count on was the little crisis known as the Great Video Game Crash of 1983. And although some companies survived and managed to keep releasing games for the Atari 2600, interest in the activity had waned, and I knew that there would no longer be any interest in the book.

Fortunately, within 10 years interest in the 2600 and other early consoles began to stir

again. I finally published *ABC to the VCS* in 1995, due to popular demand, and then released an updated second edition in 2005 that included the dozens of new games that homebrewers had released for the 2600 in the intervening years. In all, the book contained over 700 summaries. I thought it was a monumental feat.

But then, in 2007, Brett Weiss came along and wrote a similar book. Well, on the surface it appeared to be similar because Brett also summarized every game for the 2600. But he also included reviews of the games, something that I purposely stayed away from. And if that wasn't enough, he didn't stop with the 2600. Brett included reviews for every game for every American console that had been sold between 1972 and 1984!

But just because one book was complete, it didn't mean Brett's job was done. In 2009 he released another edition of *Classic Home Video Games*, which contained summaries and reviews for all of the systems that came out between 1985 and 1988. Sure, it was only three systems, but one of them was the NES, which has a catalog of over 700 games.

The systems included in the second book marked the end of a video gaming era. A new era began in Japan on October 30, 1987, when the Japanese manufacturer NEC released its PC-Engine game console. The PC-Engine, which

was released in America as the TurboGrafx-16, was hyped as a 16-bit system, although in actuality only its graphics processor was 16-bits.

However, Sega released its Genesis not long afterwards, and it was a true 16-bit machine. And after playing second fiddle to Nintendo for years, Sega finally dominated the market. But Nintendo didn't sit on its laurels. And although its 16-bit Super NES came out a year after the Genesis, it eventually caught up with the other's popularity. (*Author's note — the Super Nintendo will be fully covered in the fourth volume of the Classic Home Video Games series*).

A new generation of video game consoles meant a whole new slew of games that needed to be summarized and reviewed. And in this book you'll find games that influenced the industry like no others before it. CD storage

meant larger games and full-motion video. Sixteen-bit processing meant faster games and more realistic graphics. And along with this combination was a recipe for gaming violence unlike anything ever seen before. Two games mentioned in this book, *Mortal Kombat* and *Night Trap*, directly led to the game rating system used today.

If this is the first *Classic Home Video Games* book that you've picked up, welcome to the club! Sit back and enjoy the ride, and then rush out and purchase the two previous volumes. If you're a regular, write to Brett (brettw105@sbcglobal.net) and let him know how much you enjoyed his work.

But don't expect a response real soon. He's probably already busy with the next book in the series!

Leonard Herman became hooked on video games after he played Pong at a local bowling alley in 1972. He later became interested in home video games when he purchased his Atari VCS in 1978 and eventually accumulated a collection of nearly 600 cartridges. His book Phoenix: The Fall & Rise of Home Videogames was the first serious history of the video gaming industry and named the #2 video game book of all time by Game Informer magazine.

PREFACE

For me, 1989 was an exciting year. After slogging away for four years at a job I hated, delivering copier machines via a bobtail truck, I took the plunge and decided to do something I would enjoy, even if it meant working for less pay. I applied for and quickly got a job with Lone Star Comics, a retail chain in the Dallas–Fort Worth area.

Ironically, I was hired not because I was a comic book expert (which I was), but because of my mad truck-driving skills. My job with Lone Star, in addition to waiting on customers and sorting and bagging back issue comics, was to commandeer the company van, delivering new comics to various Lone Star locations. (My position at Lone Star led to management and then to the ownership of two comic book stores, but that’s a story for another day).

During my first year with Lone Star, three significant (mind-blowing, to be exact) pop culture events transpired: the release of the Tim Burton *Batman* film, which kicked off the second wave of Batmania (the first was during the Adam West era); the debut of *The Simpsons* television series, which changed the face of prime time television forever; and the beginning of the next generation of video game systems with the unveiling of three new consoles: the Sega Genesis, Neo Geo, and TurboGrafx-16 (not to mention the Game Boy and Atari Lynx handheld units).

While I didn’t get the chance to play a Neo Geo or a TurboGrafx-16 until later, I picked up

a Genesis shortly after the system hit store shelves. From a sheer practical standpoint, I didn’t *need* a Genesis—my Atari 2600, ColecoVision, NES, and other systems were keeping me plenty busy—but I simply *had* to have one, thanks to the stunning, arcade-like intrigue of such next-gen titles as *Altered Beast*, *Ghouls’n Ghosts*, and *Golden Axe*, and to the “oohs” and “aahs” I kept hearing from Lone Star customers and from some of my friends who had already bought (or at least played) a Genesis.

I was certainly pleased with my Genesis purchase and was doubly so with the arrival of *Sonic the Hedgehog* (1991), which at the time was the fastest, most dynamic platformer I had ever seen or played. The game helped make the Genesis *the* cool system to own. Not only that, the spunky protagonist—a blue, spiky-haired hedgehog with an attitude—quickly became Sega’s far-famed mascot, giving the company something Nintendo already had for years with Mario.

Over time, I would add many more games to my Genesis collection, including such favorites as *Captain America and the Avengers*, *Gunstar Heroes*, *Mega Bomberman*, *Ms. Pac-Man*, *Road Rash*, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*, *Space Invaders ’91*, *Streets of Rage*, *Streets of Rage 2*, and *Sunset Riders*.

Since hundreds of games were released for the system, the bulk of the book you hold in your hands covers the Sega Genesis. However, I paid no short shrift to the Neo Geo, with its

plethora of bold, brash, bombastic fighting games, or to the TurboGrafx-16, with its wonderful array of quirky titles and hardcore shooters (to this day, *Galaga* '90 is one of my all-time favorite games). Regardless of which console from 1989 is your favorite, you'll find plenty of information and opinions here on all of that system's cartridges.

Released on the heels of *Classic Home Video Games, 1972–1984* (2007) and *Classic Home Video Games, 1985–1988* (2009), *Classic Home Video Games, 1989–1990* is the third book in an ongoing series. It was fun to write, but also very difficult, partly because the games of the era are typically longer and more involved than the titles covered in the first two books.

When I talk to gamers at conventions and online, I'm sometimes asked why I write reference books instead of tips and tricks guides or historical accounts of the industry. The answers are simple. The Internet and the *Digital Press* guides have all the tips and tricks anyone needs, and Steven L. Kent (with *The Ultimate History of Video Games*) and Leonard Herman (with *Phoenix: The Fall & Rise of Videogames*) have the market cornered on history books and do a much better job of it than I ever could.

My books contain a lot of video game history, of course, what with the retro theme and all, but the emphasis is on the individual games themselves. Each entry for the Genesis, Neo Geo, and TurboGrafx-16 includes data, description, gameplay elements, and, in most cases, critical evaluation. (The games for the console add-ons, such as the Sega CD and TurboGrafx-CD, are included in appendices near the back of the book. The handheld Atari Lynx and original Game Boy are also covered in the appendices).

Another reason I write reference books is that I'm obsessed with them. It started when I was a kid during the mid-1970s and I would pore over my tattered paperback copy of the *Guinness Book of World Records* for hours, utterly transfixed by the world's tallest man, the world's longest fingernails, the world's heaviest twins, and the woman with the world's thinnest waist. (In the years since, I've read countless other reference books to pieces, including Leonard Herman's *ABC to the VCS: A*

Directory of Software for the Atari 2600, which helped pave the way for my *Classic Home Video Games* series).

In addition to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the 1970s was a decade filled with entertainments that were enticing to my impressionable young mind. These included *The Land of the Lost*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* reruns, the rock band KISS, Marvel and DC comic books, and, of course, video games. When such monolithic testaments to man's ingenuity as Midway's *Gun Fight* (1975) and Atari's *Breakout* (1976) began rubbing elbows with my beloved pinball machines at the local arcades, I quickly became hooked. To help pay for my newfound obsession, I would pop games on pinball machines I had mastered and sell the resultant credits two for a quarter.

Shortly after I discovered video games in the arcades, various cousins and friends started receiving — as Christmas presents — these incredible machines that would hook up to their television sets to play games. I wouldn't get my own game system (a ColecoVision) until 1982, but I was a frequent fixture at the homes of anyone I knew who owned *Pong* (or any number of *Pong* clones), an Atari VCS, a Fairchild Channel F system, or an Odyssey 2 (back in those days, no one I knew had two systems).

So, since I grew up playing video games and reading reference books, and since I'm a writer by trade, it only made sense to write reference books about video games.

The research I did for *Classic Home Video Games, 1989–1990* was exhaustive and exhausting. An addition to playing (and replaying) an insane number of games, many of which I had to borrow from friends or purchase on eBay or in various gaming stores throughout Texas and Oklahoma, I spent hundreds of hours going over every little detail — from character names to production dates to game developers — in order to assure that the information was as accurate as humanly possible.

Also, I tried to measure the positives and negatives of each game objectively. I took the era in which the games were made into consideration, of course, but if a game hadn't held up particularly well over time, I usually mentioned it. While graphics and sounds play

important roles, my bottom-line consideration each time I evaluate a game is how much fun it is to play.

The one drawback to researching and writing the *Classic Home Video Games* series is that it takes away from time I could be playing modern consoles, such as my son's Xbox 360 or our family's Nintendo Wii. Regardless, I largely prefer 2D twitch-gaming and scrolling action over 3D exploration and first-person

shooting anyway, so I'm content to mine the past while others pave the way forward.

For some of you, this will be your second or third book to purchase in the *Classic Home Video Games* series, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. For others, this will be your first experience with my work, and I want to thank you as well. I certainly hope you enjoy what you read.

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NEO GEO

In 1990, the SNK Corporation released the Neo Geo AES (Advanced Entertainment System). Retailing for the unthinkable price of \$649.99, with cartridges costing a minimum of \$199.99, the Neo Geo quickly developed the reputation of a hardcore gamer's video game console.

Boasting a 16-bit Motorola 68000 processor running at 12 MHz, an 8-bit ZiLOG Z80A coprocessor running at 4 MHz, a Yamaha 2610 sound chip with 15 channels of sound, a custom video chipset able to display 4,096 colors and 380 individual sprites simultaneously, the high-brow system was known for its dazzling 2D graphics, immersive audio (which included surround sound for certain titles), huge controllers, bulky cartridges, and, of course, its steep price.

One impressive aspect of the Neo Geo console was its pure compatibility with the Neo Geo MVS (Multi Video System), which was SNK's cartridge-based arcade cabinet. For every home Neo Geo AES title released in the U.S., there was an identical MVS arcade game, meaning that, for the first time, gamers could literally play arcade-perfect games on their home consoles. MVS arcade cartridges were produced in larger quantities than their home counterparts, meaning the MVS

versions are much easier to find (and thus much cheaper) in today's collector's market. Home versions of the games came with fully illustrated boxes and manuals, adding to their desirability. In addition to arcade compatibility, American Neo Geo systems can play foreign releases as well.

The Neo Geo AES introduced to the home video game market the memory card, which saves the player's progress after the system has been turned off and even after the game cartridge has been unplugged. Neo Geo AES memory cards were compatible with the Neo



Neo Geo console with controller. The Neo Geo is home to numerous fighting franchises, including *Art of Fighting*, *Fatal Fury*, *King of Fighters*, and *Samurai Shodown*.

Geo MVS, meaning gamers of the era could take their memory cards to the arcade, plug them into the corresponding MVS version of the game, and, for the price of a quarter, pick up where they left off on that game. The system also broke ground with the Multi-Link, which enabled players to cable-link two Neo Geo home systems together, allowing each player to use a separate TV set with which to view the game in progress.

Neo Geo neophytes may be puzzled by the plethora of one-on-one fighting games in the system's library. The reason for this is simple. About a year after the Neo Geo was released, Capcom's highly influential *Street Fighter II* arcade game swept the country, prompting SNK to develop a host of copycats, including the *Art of Fighting* series, the *Fatal Fury* series, and the *King of Fighters* series. (To be fair, the original *Fatal Fury* was released the same year as the original *Street Fighter II*). Since most Neo Geo MVS arcade games were also released for the Neo Geo AES, the console was flooded with 2D fighters, most of which were big, bold, brash, colorful, and fun.

SNK released the Neo Geo CD in 1994, giving consumers a cheaper way to play Neo Geo games at home. The system retailed for \$250, with CD-ROMs ranging from \$50 to \$70. Unfortunately, the ROM drive was single-speed and had less RAM capacity, meaning games had longer load times and certain releases were missing various graphical flourishes found in their cartridge-based counterparts. In today's collector's market, Neo Geo CD games are easier to find and less desirable than Neo Geo home cartridges, making them much more affordable. (Neo Geo CD games are listed in the back of this book in Appendix I).

Due primarily to its high price, the Neo Geo was disappointing commercially, but it did develop a devoted cult following that exists to this day. Neo Geo apologists swear by its fun two-player games and its superiority (at least in terms of graphics and sounds) to other systems of the era, such as the Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo. SNK stopped production on the console in 1997, but continued cranking out cartridges for the system until 2004, making the Neo Geo one of the longest-lived systems in

the history of the industry (second only to the Atari 2600).

For the many of you who don't own a Neo Geo, you can play games for the system through such online services as the Nintendo Wii Virtual Console and the PlayStation Network, and via such classics collections as *Art of Fighting Anthology* (PS2) and *SNK Arcade Classics, Vol. 1* (PS2, PSP, Wii).

Neo Geo Games

Aero Fighters 2

PUBLISHER: Video System. DEVELOPER: Video System. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Aero Fighters* (arcade, Super NES), *Aero Fighters 2* lets players select from eight different fighter planes, each of which is commandeered by a distinctive pilot, such as a dolphin, a little girl, or a ninja. Ten levels of hectic play take gamers over Japan, Brazil, New York, and other nicely illustrated areas that are filled with enemies and obstacles to shoot or bomb, including choppers, jets, tanks, submarines, buildings, a giant baboon, a Ferris wheel, and more. Each stage has a memorable boss, and there are recognizable landmarks throughout, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, and the Sydney Opera House. Also released for the Neo Geo CD. Followed by: *Aero Fighters 3* (arcade, Neo Geo CD).

Aggressors of Dark Kombat

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Unlike most 2D fighters, *Aggressors of Dark Kombat* allows players to move up and down (in addition to left and right), but that doesn't save it from being a run of the mill button-masher. There are eight brawlers from which to choose, each of which is outfitted with a number of punches, kicks, and special moves, such as the flying cross chop, the jet uppercut, and the big burn attack. Bystanders sometimes throw bottles, shovels, and other items, which the fighters can use as weapons, giving the game variety and some nice background detail.

Environments include the subway, London, a wrestling ring, and other locations. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Alpha Mission II

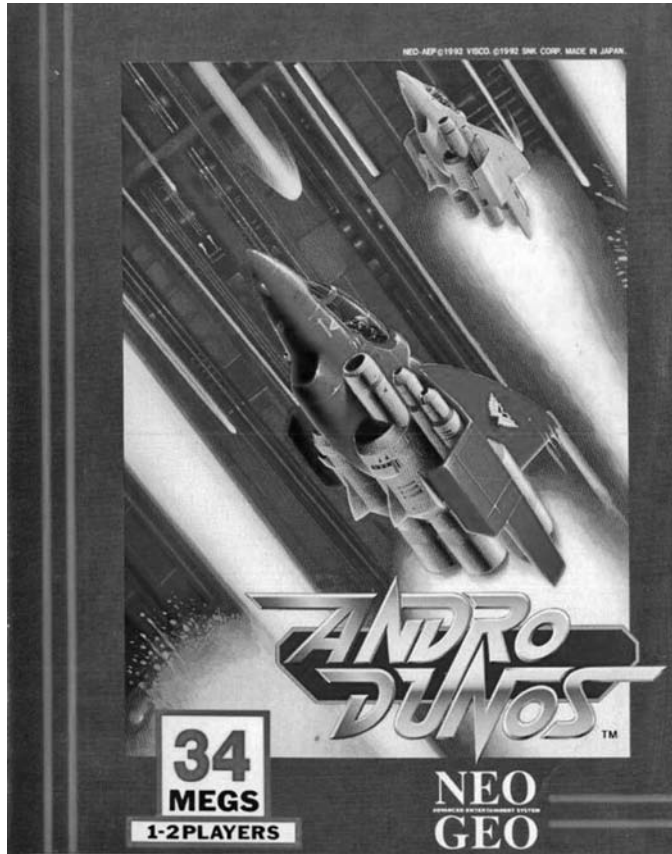
PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The sequel to *Alpha Mission* (arcade, 1985; NES, 1987), *Alpha Mission II* is a mediocre shooter with a needlessly complicated power-up system in which players fly over letters. Shooting a letter will change it into another letter, and if a letter is upside down, it will have a negative effect on whatever it contains, such as energy, armor, speed, laser power, or missile power. Weapons are selected from a pull-down menu, interrupting the flow of the action. The graphics, which depict a redundant series of space stations, are substandard for the Neo Geo, and the voice effects are poorly programmed. Varied, nicely rendered bosses give the game some appeal, but its flaws outweigh its attributes. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Andro Dunos

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Visco Games. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Andro Dunos is a typical side-scrolling shooter in which players blast their way through seven levels that are crowded with alien ships, which fly straight, diagonally, and in various formations and patterns. The player's vessel is outfitted with four different color-coded weapons: blue, orange, yellow, and green. By flying over power-up icons, players can upgrade the currently selected weapon. Once a weapon is fully powered, the player can unleash a screen-filling super attack, down-



The oddly-titled *Andro Dunos* is a side-scrolling shooter featuring two-player simultaneous action.

grading the weapon one level in the process. *Andro Dunos* borrows from such shooters as Konami's *Gradius* (arcade, 1985) and Nintendo's *R-Type* (arcade, 1987), but adds a two-player simultaneous mode. While it's not one of the more high profile shooters of the era, the oddly named *Andro Dunos* is a lot of fun.

Art of Fighting

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Obviously patterned after Capcom's *Street Fighter II* (arcade, 1991), *Art of Fighting* is a one-on-one street brawler with the expected punches, kicks, and special moves, the latter of which are tough to execute and reduce the player's "chi bar" when used. The camera pulls away when the fighters are far apart and zooms in when the fighters draw near, making for a

neat visual effect. The fighters are nice and big (make that HUGE) and get visibly bruised and cut when hit, but the animation looks awkward. The story mode includes just two selectable characters (compared to eight in Vs. Mode), but it does offer three different bonus rounds/skill tests (including ice block smashing) that can upgrade the characters' attributes. Overall, *Art of Fighting*, though largely derivative, offers ample entertainment and a couple of minor innovations. Also released for the Genesis, SNES, PS2 (via *Art of Fighting Anthology*), and Neo Geo CD.

Art of Fighting 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Art of Fighting 2 features roughly the same type of one-on-one fighting action as the original game, but it's harder to beat and gives players 12 selectable characters in both Vs. and Story modes. One button is used for kicking and one for punching, and holding down either button results in a stronger attack, making for an unusual (and somewhat cumbersome) fighting system (similar to that found in *World Heroes*). Once again, the graphics are very nicely rendered, the fighters are huge, the camera zooms in and out to follow the action, and using special moves depletes the player's chi bar. Also released for the PS2 (via *Art of Fighting Anthology*) and Neo Geo CD.

Art of Fighting 3: Path of the Warrior

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

Boasting better character animation than the previous two games in the series (thanks in part to the use of motion capture technology), *Art of Fighting 3* gives players 10 selectable fighters, eight of which are new to the series (only Ryo and Robert remain). The game is easier than *Art of Fighting 2*, and it has a number of new features, including a deflecting move and an attacking maneuver on fallen foes. Thankfully, the "hold button for stronger attacks" format from *Art of Fighting 2* has been dropped in place of a more conventional control scheme. Also released for the PS2 (via *Art of Fighting Anthology*) and Neo Geo CD.

Baseball Stars Professional

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

An early Neo Geo sports title, *Baseball Stars Professional* is pure arcade-style action. As in real baseball, players can bunt, steal, lead-off, substitute players, and more, but the game has the type of pick-up-and-play feel that casual fans of the sport will appreciate. There are 16 teams to choose from (comprised of males and females) and some lively voice announcing, and players can compete head-to-head or in single matches. Unfortunately, fielders are prohibitively slow, and the graphics are disappointingly ordinary. In addition, *Baseball Stars Professional* bears little resemblance to SNK's excellent *Baseball Stars* for the NES. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Baseball Stars 2

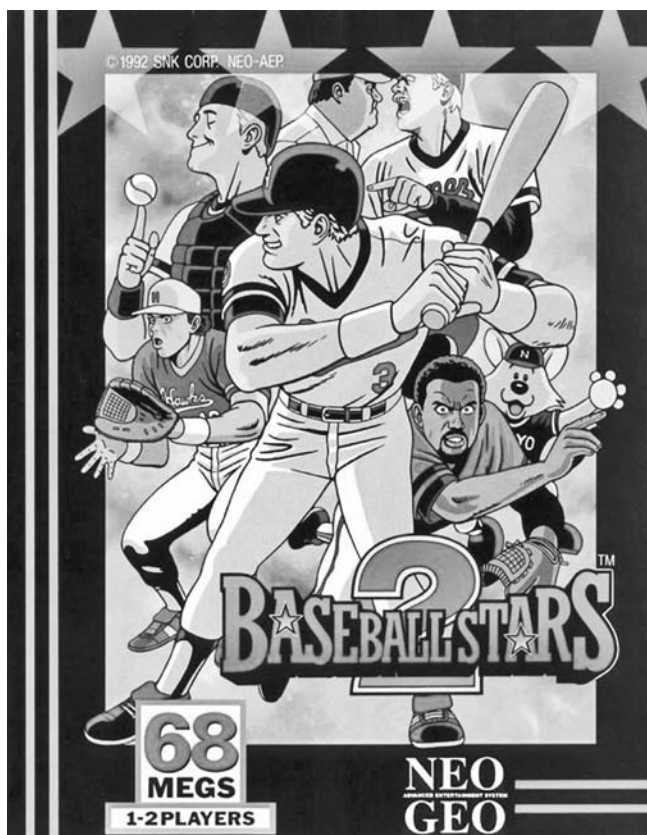
PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The sequel to *Baseball Stars Professional*, *Baseball Stars 2* ups the ante considerably with better animation, superior graphics and sounds, more camera angles, and bigger, faster players. In fact, the players are so bulked up they appear to be on steroids. The arcade-style action is a blast, and the cut scenes, some of which are highly amusing (if a batter gets hit by a pitch, he goes after the pitcher, for example), are fun to watch. There are six different teams to choose from in this user-friendly title, and the one-player mode is a 15-game tournament. Power-ups can be earned during games to beef up batter strength, and gamers can make substitutions and roster changes. Also released for the Neo Geo CD. Released the same year as *Baseball Stars II* (NES). Followed by: *Baseball Stars Color* (NGPC).

Blue's Journey

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A rare example of a cute platformer for the Neo Geo, *Blue's Journey* is fairly typical for a game of its type, with players running across platforms and jumping over pits and other ob-



Baseball Stars 2 features big, bulky players and arcade-style gameplay.

stacles and on top of birds, lizards, Vikings, and other enemies. Blue is equipped with a giant leaf for attacking, and stunned enemies can be picked up and used as weapons. Blue's most unusual asset is the ability to shrink to reach otherwise inaccessible areas, and he can pick up flowers for use in purchasing items that, since the game is pretty easy to begin with, aren't really necessary for beating the game. *Blue's Journey* has garish pastel colors that will make some gamers gag, and the platforming action is decidedly mediocre. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Burning Fight

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Burning Fight is an inferior *Final Fight* clone in which one or two players select from

three poorly animated street fighters, each of whom has his own special move. As in *Final Fight*, the characters are larger than in most side-scrolling brawlers, and using special moves drains the player's energy. The fighters can punch, kick, and throw the enemies (which are highly repetitious), and they can wield such familiar weapons as knives and broken bottles. Certain background locations can be entered, setting *Burning Fight* apart somewhat from similar titles, but fans of this type of game should stick with *Final Fight CD* for the Sega CD or the *Streets of Rage* series for the Genesis. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Crossed Swords

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. First-Person Action, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Although it shares certain elements of play with SNK's own *The Super Spy*, *Crossed Swords* is an unusual first-person hack-and-slash game in which players, viewing an outline of the back of their fighter (à la the arcade version of *Punch-Out!!*), battle through six levels of skeletons, knights, crabs, and other creatures. The player's shield-wielding knight can block low and high attacks, and he can gain RPG-like experience by killing bad guys. Downed enemies will frequently emit gold, medicine, and magic, the latter of which takes the form of fireballs or other weaponry. The action is repetitious, but *Crossed Swords* looks and sounds fantastic. Also released for the Neo Geo CD. Followed by: *Crossed Swords 2* (Neo Geo CD).

Cyber-Lip

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

This oddly titled game, named after its final boss, is a platform shooter in the mold of

Contra and *Metal Slug*. However, it's not as good as those classics, thanks in part to the fact that neither soldier can fire diagonally. They can collect special weapons and cycle through them as needed, but the wide shot, which is similar to the awesome spread shot in *Contra*, is disappointingly weak. The graphics are nice, but level design is generic. The alien creatures and terminators are frequently tough to avoid, but unlimited continues make the game beatable in a short time. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Eightman

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Pallas. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

In *Eightman*, players guide a goofily garbed robot through four levels (City on Fire, Jungle Complex, City Complex, and Cyber Lair), punching, kicking, and throwing bombs at cyborgs, flying robots, monsters, zombies, bosses, and other enemies. In two-player mode, gamers can combine their bombs for a special super attack. A slide attack is available, but it's essentially worthless, and items can be grabbed for powering up all of the player's attacks. There's platforming involved as well, but it's limited in scope. Hampered by poorly designed characters, bland backgrounds, limited sound effects, and repetitive gameplay, *Eightman* isn't unplayable, but it is all too easy to ignore. Based on the 1960s Japanese cartoon series.

Fatal Fury

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Released later in the same year as Capcom's coin-op classic, *Street Fighter II*, *Fatal Fury* is similar to its more famous progenitor, but it does feature an innovative technique of allowing players to jump their fighter back and forth between the foreground and the background. The game also boasts arm wrestling bonus rounds and inventive two-player action, the latter of which has gamers teaming to battle a computer-controlled character, then facing off to see who continues in story mode.

There are three fighters to select from, each of which can punch, kick, throw, and execute special moves (such as fireballs or a hurricane attack). *SFII* is faster, more fun, and better balanced, but *Fatal Fury* is nevertheless an important entry in fighting game history. Also released for the Genesis, SNES, PS2 (via *Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1*), and Neo Geo CD.

Fatal Fury Special

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Released between *Fatal Fury 2* and *Fatal Fury 3*, *Fatal Fury Special* is more an update of *Fatal Fury 2* than it is a true sequel. The two-plane fighting formula returns, as do desperation moves, but there are now 15 selectable fighters, eight of which are repeated from *FF2*. Each of the seven new fighters has his or her own background visuals and music, giving the impression that SNK put forth more than a token effort in upgrading the game. Also released for the Game Gear, SNES, Sega CD, PS2 (via *Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1*), and Neo Geo CD.

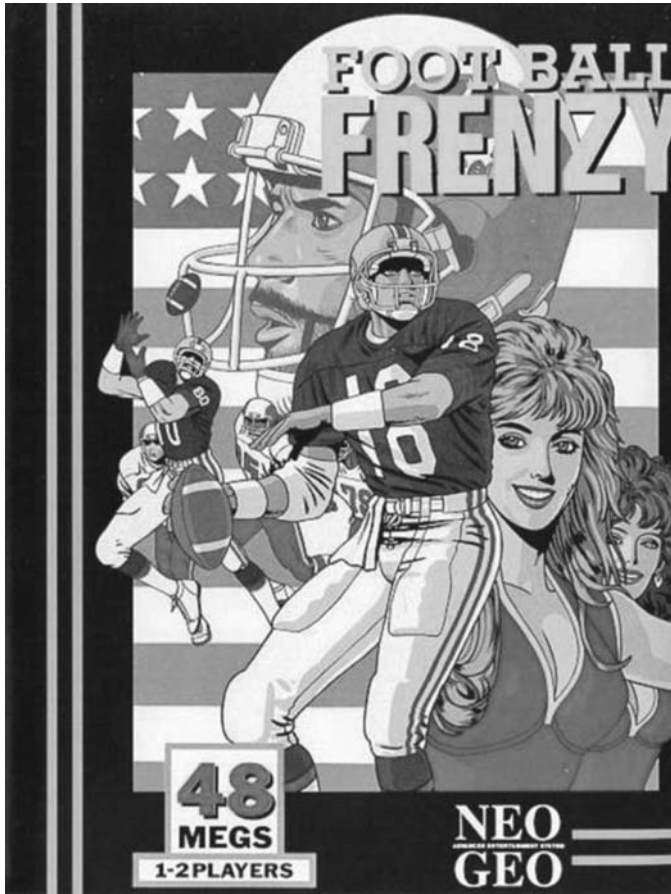
Fatal Fury 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Fatal Fury 2 improves upon the first game in the series in a number of ways. It offers eight selectable fighters (as opposed to three), the action has been sped up, the animation is more polished (though still not perfect), and stage design, while nice in the original *Fatal Fury*, is even better (there are now damageable items, for example). The two-plane playfield, which allows fighters to jump between the foreground and background, makes a return engagement, but there is a new system in place that allows heavily damaged fighters to pull off desperation moves, which are purposely harder to execute than special moves. Also released for the Genesis, SNES, PS2 (via *Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1*), and Neo Geo CD.

Fatal Fury 3: Road to the Final Victory

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.



A top-down take on the popular sport, *Football Frenzy* brings gridiron action to the Neo Geo.

The fourth entry in the *Fatal Fury* series (*Fatal Fury Special* was the third), this game changes the formula by adding a third plane of space which, ironically, makes the game less versatile. In the earlier games, fighters could battle in the foreground or the background at any time during a bout, but most of the fighting in this game takes place in the newly added middle plane. The fighters can only stay in the foreground and background a brief time, meaning those planes are used for little more than dodging attacks. Desperation moves first seen in *Fatal Fury 2* are included, and players can select from 10 different fighters, each of which can punch, kick, throw, and pull off special moves. Also released for the PS2 (via *Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1*) and Neo Geo CD. Followed by: *Real Bout Fatal Fury*.

Football Frenzy

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Football Frenzy is a flawed, but playable, arcade-style version of the popular sport. On offense, gamers are given a number of plays to select from, but a stingy timer makes the selection process difficult. On defense, the onscreen players always begin in the same formation, meaning there are no selectable defensive plays, and the computer A.I. is less than brilliant on both sides of the ball. The game lacks such features as stats, substitutions, and real-world team names. Visually, the game sports an overhead perspective, with an angled view of the rather large players. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Galaxy Fight: Universal Warriors

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Sunsoft. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Although it's one of the weaker fighting titles for the Neo Geo, *Galaxy Fight* does have one unusual trait that sets it apart from such titles as *King of Fighters* and *Art of Fighting*. The game lacks boundaries, meaning the fighters can back up indefinitely. This makes the dashing technique a crucial method of attack and combos somewhat less important. Players select from eight different characters, running the gamut from generic in appearance to downright odd. Each fighter has a number of special moves with such names as ninja death tornado, needle shot, giant knuckle, and hurricane kick. Multi-layered parallax scrolling and solid stage design (including some reflective water effects) give the game a nice look, but the fighting engine is merely adequate. Also released for the Sega Saturn and Neo Geo CD.

Garou: Mark of the Wolves

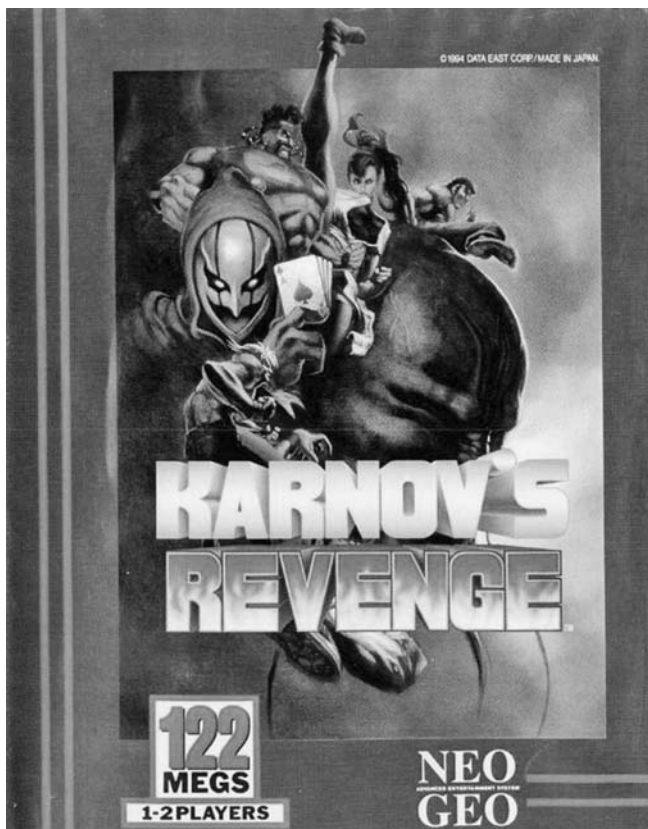
PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2000.

This entry in the *Fatal Fury* series is one of the best 2D fighting games for any system. Only Bogard remains from previous titles, but the new fighters are formidable and fun to use. There are 14 brawlers in all, including Rock Howard, son of Geese. A new feature called Tactical Offensive Position lets players, prior to beginning a fight, select one of three points on the life bar. When the fighter's energy has been depleted to that point on the life bar, the player can perform a special T.O.P. move. Gone are the multi-plane playfields from earlier *Fatal Fury* entries. *Garou: Mark of the Wolves* has nicely detailed graphics and topnotch animation, helping make it a very well-rounded game. Released for the Dreamcast as *Fatal Fury: Mark of the Wolves*.

Ghost Pilots

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Ghost Pilots, which plays a lot like 1942 (minus the looping technique), has gamers flying a plane over grasslands, seas, clouds, and mountains, firing bullets, missiles, and bombs at tanks, trains, boats, ships, planes, and other enemies. Pick-ups, which appear after shooting a wave of red enemies, include extra lives, special weapons, bonus points, and an increase in firepower (resulting in more bullets per button press). The player's airplane is a bit on the slow side (making the missiles and other projectiles hard to dodge at times), and the action is generic and repetitive. However, *Ghost Pilots* is nevertheless a playable (and even enjoyable) shooter. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.



Karnov's Revenge

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Data East. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Fighter's History* (arcade, 1993), *Karnov's Revenge* is the Neo Geo release of *Fighter's History Dynamite* (arcade, 1994). The reason for the name change is that Capcom sued Data East over similarities between *Fighter's History* and *Street Fighter II*. *Karnov's Revenge* offers 13 selectable fighters, including Karnov and all eight characters from *Fighter's History*, each of which has been given new moves and techniques. *Karnov's Revenge* does indeed look and play a lot like *Street Fighter II*, but it incorporates the element found in *Fighter's History* in which each character has a weak point identifiable by a piece of flashing clothing. After being hit a number of times, the garment falls off, dizzying the character in the process. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Not to be confused with *Karnov* for the arcades and NES, *Karnov's Revenge* is the Neo Geo release of *Fighter's History Dynamite* (arcade, 1994).

The King of Fighters '94

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

King of Fighters '94 added a new twist to the genre. Fighters go at it one-on-one like in most *Street Fighter II*-style games, but each player has three characters on their team, with each subsequent fighter stepping in as the previous fighter has been defeated. There are eight teams of fighters, meaning there are 24 characters in all. Some fighters are new (such as Kyo Kusanagi), but most are taken from such previously released games as *Art of Fighting*, *Fatal Fury*, *Psycho Soldiers*, and *Ikari Warriors*. Unlike the arcade version, this home rendition gives players the option of selecting just one fighter. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters '95

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

King of Fighters '95 improves upon the previous game in the series by sprucing up the graphics a bit and by including a Team Edit option, which allows players to form their own three-fighter teams. In addition, Team USA, the highly unpopular sports-based trio from *KOF '94*, has been replaced by Billy Kane, Eiji Kisaragi, and Iori Yagami. The other seven teams remain the same, as does the basic fighting engine, which allows for light and hard punches and kicks, desperation moves, quick defensive attacks, and a variety of special moves. A number of new moves have been added, such as Terry Bogard's power dunk maneuver. Also released for the Game Boy, PSX, and Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters '96

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

King of Fighters '96 ups the ante on the previous two games in the series by featuring slightly larger characters, superior graphics and sounds, and a ninth team comprised of bosses: Geese Howard and Wolfgang Krauser from *Fatal Fury*; and Mr. Big from *Art of Fighting*. Some of the original eight teams have had ros-

ter adjustments, such as Leona replacing Heiden on the Ikari Warriors team. Gameplay tweaks include faster action, projectiles that don't travel as far across the screen, a somewhat easier level of challenge, simplified super moves, and the replacing of side-steps with forward and backwards rolls. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters '97

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1997.

The fourth game in the series, *King of Fighters '97* includes most of the characters from the previous game, but there are some changes, such as Team England replacing Kasumi Todoh with Chizuru Kagura. Geese Howard's boss team is gone, but *Fatal Fury* veterans Billy Kane, Ryuji Yamazaki, and Blue Mary are here, as is a trio of musicians. Two new modes of play are available: Extra, which employs the *KOF '95* fighting style; and Advanced, which borrows from *KOF '96*. In addition, the help system has been revised in that certain characters will or won't come to the aid of specific other fighters. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters '98

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1998.

King of Fighters '98 is a "dream match" of sorts, pitting the characters of previous *King of Fighters* games against one another for a total of more than 50 fighters (including some that are hidden). As usual, teams are comprised of three fighters, and each fight is a one-on-one match in which each subsequent fighter steps in for the defeated fighter until only one player has a fighter standing. Modes of play include Extra, Advanced, Survivor, Clear Time, Practice, and Roulette Team Edit, the latter of which has the computer randomly selecting your team. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters '99

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1999.

In *King of Fighters '99*, each of the game's seven teams consists of four characters: three standard fighters (for use in one-on-one action) and a "striker," the latter of which can be summoned during fights (by pressing B and C) to give the player an assist, such as a health boost or a quick attack on the other fighter. Gameplay combines the Extra and Advance modes of previous games and introduces two new modes: Counter and Armor. New characters include K', Maxima, Bao, Whip, Krizalid, and a pair of Kyo clones. Also released for the PSX and Neo Geo CD.

The King of Fighters 2000

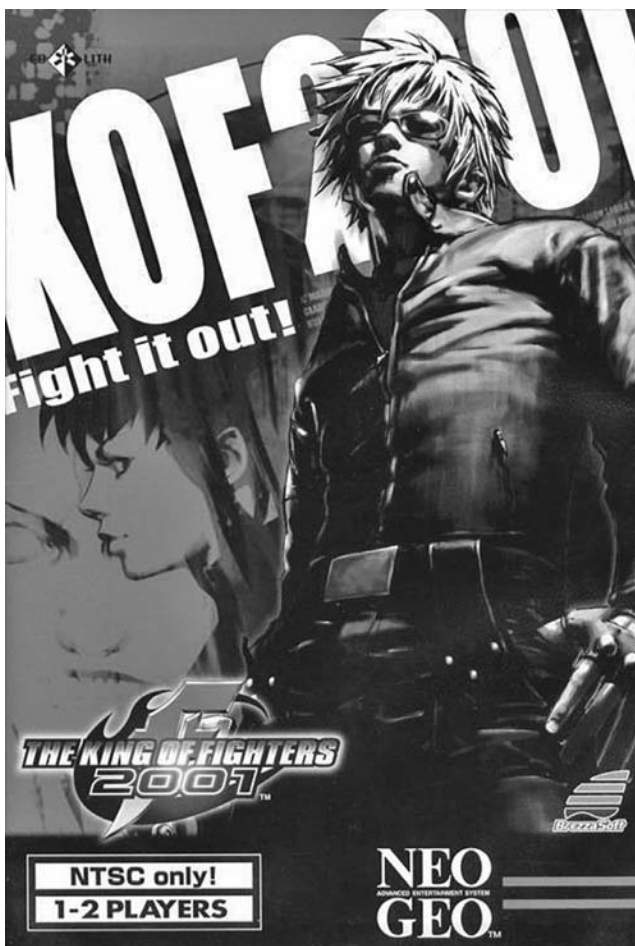
PUBLISHER: NeoGeoFreak. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2000.

Like *KOF '99*, *King of Fighters 2000* incorporates strikers into the action, but they are doubled in number this time out. The game includes all the standard fighters from the previous entry in the series, plus six new ones: Vanessa (a boxer), Ramon (a wrestler), Seth (a bruiser sporting a Mohawk), Lin (a ninja), Hinako (a schoolgirl sumo wrestler), and Kula (who uses ice as a weapon). Desperation moves, super moves, super desperation moves, team fighting (featuring one-on-one fights), and other staples of the *KOF* series remain firmly intact. Also released for the PS2 (via *The King of Fighters 2000/2001*).

The King of Fighters 2001

PUBLISHER: Brezzasoft. DEVELOPER: Eolith. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2002.

The eighth game in the series, *King of Fighters 2001* modifies the striker feature introduced in *KOF '99* by letting players select four fighters with no strikers, three fighters with one striker, two fighters with two strikers, or one fighter with three strikers. The game also has

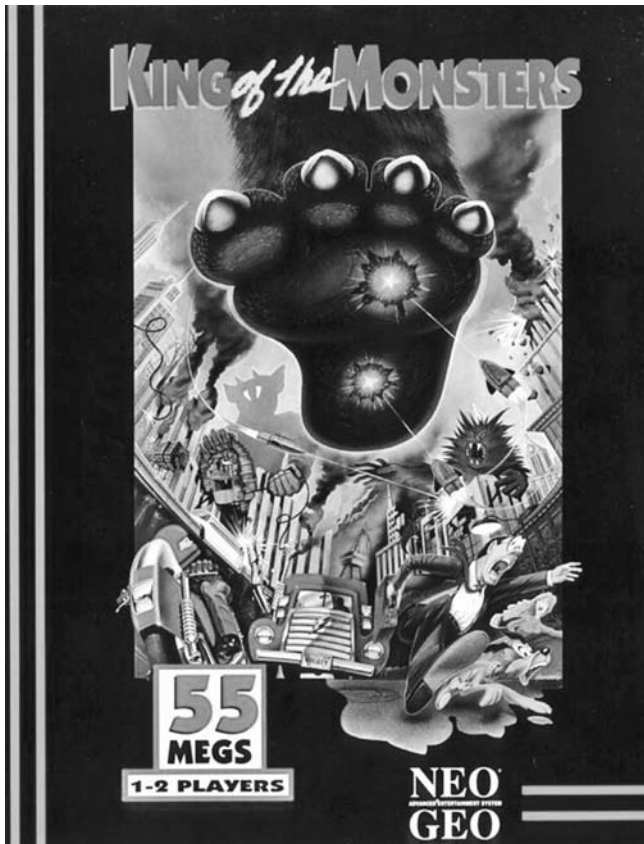


The eighth game in the *King of Fighters* series, *The King of Fighters 2001* for the Neo Geo was also released for the PS2 (via *The King of Fighters 2000/2001*).

wire attacks, which let players bounce their opponent off the side of the screen, and super cancel attacks, which allow players to quickly turn a special attack into a super attack. New characters to the popular franchise include Angel (who uses circle chain moves), K9999 (pronounced "Kay four nine"), and May Lee (a martial artist). This was the first Neo Geo game released after SNK of Japan closed its doors. Also released for the PS2 (via *The King of Fighters 2000/2001*).

The King of Fighters 2002

PUBLISHER: Sun Amusement. DEVELOPER: Eolith. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2002.



Inspired by the *Godzilla* films, *King of the Monsters* is a fighting game that was also released for the Genesis and SNES.

Like *KOF '98*, *King of Fighters 2002* eschews storytelling in favor of a dream match format featuring fighters from previous games in the series. Strikers, which first appeared in *KOF '99*, have been removed, and each team is comprised of three members. More than 40 characters are available. The fighting action is fast and smooth, and the predictable (if slightly tweaked) fighting action will please fans of the series. Also released for the PS2 (via *The King of Fighters 02/03*).

The King of Fighters 2003

PUBLISHER: SNK Playmore. DEVELOPER: SNK Playmore. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2004.

The 10th and final *KOF* game to appear on the Neo Geo, *King of Fighters 2003* changes up the fighting system by employing a tag team

format. Each of the three-fighter teams consists of a tactical leader (who can pull off leader desperation moves) and two standard teammates, and substituting one fighter for another in the middle of an attack allows for some pretty interesting combos. A number of less substantial changes have been made, such as a dizzying effect for fighters that have taken too much damage. Also released for the PS2 (via *The King of Fighters 02/03*). Followed by: *The King of Fighters 2006* (PS2), *The King of Fighters XII* (PS3, Xbox 360), and other sequels.

King of the Monsters

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Inspired by *Rampage*, *Street Fighter II*, and the various *Godzilla* movies, *King of the Monsters* lets players select one of six different giant monsters (an ape, a lizard, a super-hero, a stone creature, a swamp ghost, or a gorilla), each of which can run, jump, punch,

kick, and pull off a variety of wrestling moves. Fights take place via rampages across seven Japanese cities, with the monsters earning points by stomping pedestrians, vehicles, bridges, buildings, and more. Computer-controlled monsters tend to cheat, but the two-player action is fairly enjoyable as players can fight one another or work as a team. Also released for the Genesis and SNES, but those versions do not allow gamers to team up against two computer-controlled creatures.

King of the Monsters 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

King of the Monsters 2 offers the same type of monster mashing, city bashing action as the first game in the series, but adds better visuals

and a few new twists, including an underwater stage, U.S. environments, and some side-scrolling action. There are now just three monsters from which to choose (Atomic Guy, Cyber Woo, and Super Geon), but each character has his own special attacks. In addition, pinning the opponent is no longer necessary. Also released for the Genesis, Neo Geo CD, and the SNES, but the Genesis version removes the side-scrolling elements of play.

Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

The follow-up to *Savage Reign*, *Kizuna Encounter* introduces tag-team fighting to the formula, which is unusual for the genre (as opposed to wrestling games, which often feature tagging). Each player selects two of 10 available fighters. To tag the inactive fighter (shown in the background), players must position the active fighter (shown in the foreground) in a specific tag area, adding some interesting strategies to the typical punching, kicking, jumping, weapons using action. If an active fighter's health meters run out (each fighter has two), that player loses the match regardless of the condition of the inactive fighter. Characters returning from *Savage Reign* include: Sho Hayate, Max Eagle, Gordon Bowman, Chung Paifu, Joker, Gozu, Mezu, and King Lion. The two new characters are sword-swinging Rosa and bo staff-bearing Kim Sue II. Bosses include King Leo and Jyazu, the latter of whom attacks with claws and can transform into a crow. Unlike *Savage Reign*, *Kizuna Encounter* does not feature an upper plane to jump up to and fight on.

The Last Blade

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1998.

Reminiscent of *Samurai Shodown*, *The Last Blade* is a highly polished, weapons-based fighter. Players select from 12 different nicely drawn, nicely animated combatants, each of which can punch, kick, slash, jump, repel, and perform such special moves as Genbu no Okina's unique turtle thrust. In Power mode,

fighters can pull off unblockable attacks and super desperation moves. In Speed mode, fighters can execute super fast combo specials. Lavishly detailed environments are icing on the cake. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The Last Blade 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1999.

The Last Blade 2 is similar to the original game, but lets players control two bosses and two new characters, for a total of 16 selectable fighters. The Power and Speed modes have returned, supplemented by a new EX mode that combines Power and Speed, but gives players weaker defenses. Minor changes to the formula include the ability to repel while jumping and less effective throwing attacks. This hard-to-find game was ported to the Sega Dreamcast, but the Neo Geo version has sharper graphics. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Last Resort

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Last Resort has players piloting a fighter capable of grabbing an *R-Type*-like pod that circles around the ship (it can be locked into place with the B button), shoots when the player shoots, and blocks enemy fire. Other ship enhancements include speed, missile, and laser power-ups. The first level has a visual design that evokes *Akira* (1988), and the graphics in general do a nice job of portraying a futuristic world in which machines have taken over. A second player can join in, making this brutally difficult game somewhat easier to beat. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

League Bowling

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Bowling, 1–4 players (alternating). 1991.

Like *Super Bowling* for the Super NES, *League Bowling* has cartoonish graphics and is highly playable. The in-game graphics only

take up half the screen (the right half depicts a busty blonde showing players how to move the bowler and set the spin and power), but the behind/above the bowler perspective works well. Selectable features include right and left handed bowlers, ball weights ranging from 8–15 pounds, and three modes of play: Regulation, Strike 90, and Flash!, the latter of which adds a little strategy to the game. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Magician Lord

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

With its organic platforms, pulsating bosses, and beautiful backgrounds (including a cratered moon and a pit of burning skulls), *Magician Lord* was one of the best looking home video games on the market at the time of its release. Players guide a magician named Elta through eight fun, cleverly designed stages, walking slowly, climbing ladders swiftly, entering doors to other areas, falling and rising great distances, and shooting a variety of creepy creatures. Elta is equipped with a *Strider*-like firing mechanism and can grab orbs to enhance firing power and jumping ability. Depending on the combination of orbs collected, Elta can transform into six different characters: Waterman, Dragon Warrior, Shinobi, Samurai, Raijin (whose shots are, unfortunately, short-range), and Poseidon. *Magician Lord* is a difficult game (fast projectiles, quick enemies, and falling objects are hard to avoid), so it's nice that unlimited continues are available. Between levels, players are "treated" to poorly voiced trash talking by the evil Gul-Agieze. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Matrimelee

PUBLISHER: Sun Amusement. DEVELOPER: Atlus. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2003.

Released late in the life of the Neo Geo, *Matrimelee* gets its odd title from the storyline, which finds the fighters battling to see who will marry Princess Sissy (who appears as a playable boss in the home version, but not in the arcades). The game is an offshoot of the humor-

ous, but hard-hitting *Power Instinct* (which hit the arcades in 1993 and the SNES in 1994), with 15 standard selectable fighters, plus four unlockable characters from *Rage of the Dragons* (Jimmy, Alias, Lynn, and Jones). Fighting moves include a variety of punches, kicks, rolls, smashes, blasts, waves, shots, lunges, slashes, throws, and more. Amusingly, a dog hurls bones while a grandmother throws her false teeth, and players can even hit and throw the referee. When a fighter's stress meter gets full, he or she will unleash a powerful energy wave, helping cut down on one fighter totally dominating the other. If two characters taunt simultaneously, a Bloodline Battle kicks into play, in which gamers must quickly push buttons in conjunction with commands shown on a television screen.

Metal Slug

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Nazca. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

Metal Slug is essentially *Contra* on steroids. Released during the 3D craze brought on by the PlayStation and Sega Saturn, *Metal Slug* is 2D gaming at its most action-packed, with gamers—as the blonde haired Marco or the shades wearing Tarma—running along firing a pistol at everything in sight, including aircraft, boats, cannons, helicopters, tanks, bamboo huts, and, most prominently, evil soldiers. The setting evokes World War II, and freeing POWs grants extra points or such weaponry as shotguns, rocket launchers, or flamethrowers (which set enemies on fire in shocking fashion). Players can also grab grenades, slash enemies that are close, and drive a tank. In addition to hardcore shooter mayhem, *Metal Slug* has fun voice effects and gorgeous graphics. The screen is constantly busy with nicely animated enemies, tanks, falling buildings, and other highly detailed visuals (slowdown does rear its head at times). *Metal Slug* was a notorious quarter-muncher in the arcades, so it's nice to play the game at home. Unfortunately, thanks to a low production run, it's one of the harder Neo Geo cartridges to find, making it quite expensive. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Metal Slug 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1998.

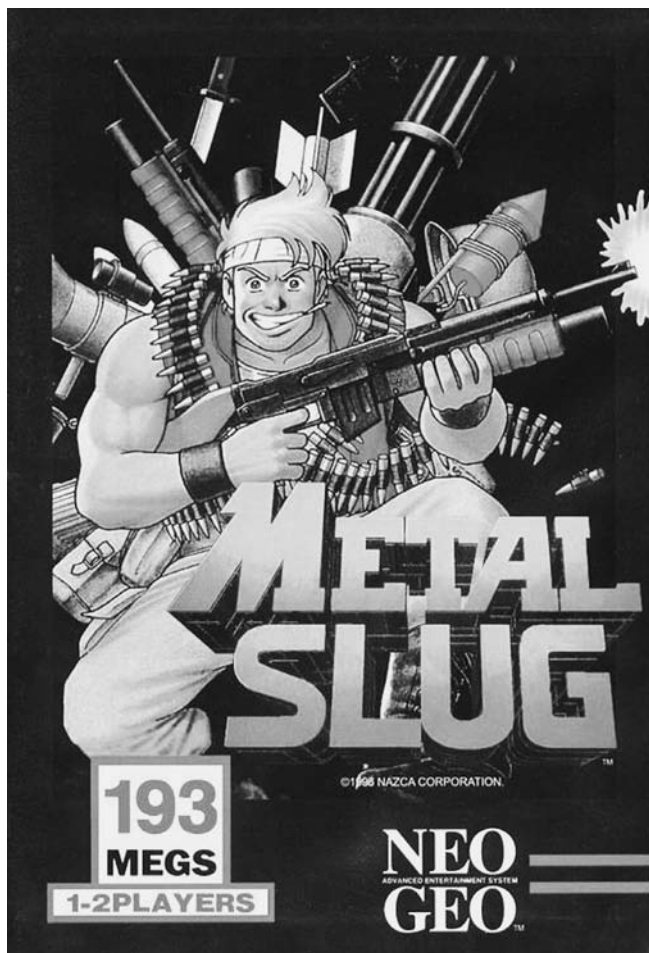
Metal Slug 2 features the same type of run-and-gun action as the original, but offers a new weapon (a super powerful laser beam), new enemies (including aliens and mummies), and two more characters to control: Eri and Fio, both of whom are female. Each character controls the same, but has unique animations. In addition to the *Metal Slug* tank (which features new armor piercing bullets), players can now commandeer a mech, a plane, and even a camel, the latter of which has rotating firepower. If fun, frantic action is the hallmark of the *Metal Slug* series, humor is a close second

as players can now turn into a slow, lumbering mummy (by getting hit by mummy breath) or a fat, but powerful slob (by grabbing too many food items). Once again, the graphics are beautifully detailed and very nicely animated. Especially entertaining are the enemies, which die in a variety of morbid, yet amusing ways, such as disintegrating, exploding to bits and pieces, or falling on their knees while spurting blood. Over-the-top action at its finest, marred only by occasional slowdown. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Metal Slug 3

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2001.

Released after *Metal Slug X* dazzled gamers with its near-perfect gameplay, *Metal Slug 3* changed up the formula somewhat by introducing multiple pathways (including hidden routes). For example, the first level, which starts off on a beach, ends with the option of piloting a submarine underwater or running across a bridge, firing away at giant insects. That's right — *MS3* features a variety of new enemies as well, including snails, zombies (which can turn the player into a zombie), and man-eating plants. New weapons include an Uzi-firing monkey tagalong, a lightning-spewing thundercloud, and an electricity-shooting satellite. There are new vehicles as well, including a helicopter, an elephant, a double-jump, an ostrich, a drill, and a space shuttle. *Metal Slug 3* has five levels (including a factory, an Egyptian tomb, and an alien ship) while the previous games have six. Luckily, level five is extra long and features four mini-bosses (in addition to the standard boss). Tough, fun, and graphically gorgeous, *Metal Slug 3* is a fine entry in the series.



Metal Slug is a hardcore platform shooter similar to *Contra*, but it adds humor to the run-and-gun gameplay.

Metal Slug 4

PUBLISHER: Playmore. DEVELOPER: Mega Enterprise. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2002.

Metal Slug 4 offers little new to the series and plays similar to the first *Metal Slug*. It also borrows the concept of branching pathways from *Metal Slug 3*. Playable characters Eri and Tarma have been replaced by Trevor and Nadia, but they control the same (devoted fans will be glad that Eri and Tarma do appear in cameos). The only new weapon is a double heavy machine gun, but several new vehicles have been added: motorcycle, truck, Bradley tank, metal crow tank, four-legged walkmachine, and forklift truck. In addition, players can now turn into a monkey (by getting shot by a scientist), which walks slowly but can jump high and grab onto ceilings. One new feature longtime fans will appreciate is the use of the D button for initiating the game's patented kamikaze attacks, in which players exit a vehicle and let it go quickly toward enemies to explode (previous games required pressing A and B simultaneously for this maneuver). Another new addition is being able to score extra points by grabbing specific icons and then shooting as many enemies as possible while a timer runs down. Also released for the PS2 and Xbox (via *Metal Slug 4/Metal Slug 5*).

Metal Slug 5

PUBLISHER: SNK Playmore. DEVELOPER: SNK Playmore. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2004.

Eri and Tarma return as playable characters in *Metal Slug 5*, replacing Trevor and Nadia. Gameplay remains faithful to the *Metal Slug* formula, with players running, jumping, and shooting everything in sight. However, gamers can now perform a slide-dash maneuver (à la *Mega Man 3*), and there are lots of new enemies, including mecha, special forces agents, terrorists, and tribesmen. The game also includes three new vehicles: a gunner, which features a rotating gun turret; a car, which shoots homing missiles and has a gun turret mounted on the back; and a spider, which has double gun turrets and a harpoon-like attack

mechanism. *Metal Slug 5* is easier than previous installments, but lacks much of the humor of those games. Also, unlike *Metal Slug 3*, there are very few branching pathways. Overall, the game is as entertaining and as pretty to look at as you'd expect, but it doesn't offer anything overly interesting to the increasingly tired (at least to some gamers) formula. Also released for the PS2 and Xbox (via *Metal Slug 4/Metal Slug 5*). Released the same year as *Metal Slug Advance* (GBA). Followed by: *Metal Slug 6* (the Japanese PS2), *Metal Slug 7* (DS), *Metal Slug XX* (PSP), and *Metal Slug Anthology* (PS2, PSP, Wii), which contains installments 1–6 and X.

Metal Slug X

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1999.

Released between *Metal Slug 2* and *Metal Slug 3*, *Metal Slug X* is basically *Metal Slug 2* enhanced with reduced slowdown, new enemies (including mummified dogs), new weapons (including stones, iron lizard, enemy chaser, and drop shot), and tweaked music and levels, the latter of which feature better placement of weapons, more frequent usage of vehicles, and the ability to turn big more often. In addition, there are now big versions of such previously seen weapons as the flamethrower, laser, shotgun, and machine gun. There's one new vehicle: a bronze tank, which is similar to the standard tank, but moves faster and jumps higher. Interestingly, certain areas have been re-colored, such as the desert stage now taking place at night. Like the other *Metal Slug* games, *Metal Slug X* is a hectic blast, especially when played by two gamers. Unfortunately, it is hard to find. Also released for the PSX. Released the same year as *Metal Slug: 1st Mission* (NGPC).

Mutation Nation

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Alien invaders have attacked, turning humans into hideous mutants. To save the day, one or two players must battle through the city (including a museum, a dance club, a seaport, moving flatbed trucks, and more), punching

and kicking an assortment of plant people, fish-headed freaks, bat-headed beasts, and other creatures (which are creatively designed, but ultimately redundant). There are no *Double Dragon*– or *Streets of Rage*–style weapons to pick up and use, but players can perform super attacks, two of which—chain kick and spin-punch—are character-specific, the others involving the grabbing of power-ups in the form of letter icons (an unusual, but ultimately lackluster feature). To use a super attack, it must be charged up by holding down the attack button. *Mutation Nation* is one of a series of mediocre beat-'em-ups for the Neo Geo: walk, dodge, punch, kick, jump, repeat. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Nam-1975

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Third-Person Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

In *Nam-1975*, the screen scrolls to the right, and the player guides a soldier right and left along the foreground/bottom of the screen (the view is from behind the soldier's back), dodging gunfire and grenades while shooting and lobbing grenades at enemy combatants, helicopters, airplanes, tanks, and other fodder moving in the background (buildings can be shot as well). Aiming is achieved by guiding crosshairs around the screen, and players can pick up additional weaponry in the form of an automatic machine gun, a flamethrower, extra powerful grenades, and doubled firepower. The game is tough (thanks in part to stingy special weapons dispensation), but a second player or a rescued blonde can join in to help even the odds. The action is near-constant as players must dart back-and-forth to stay alive and grab bonus points. Nifty cut scenes with stunningly good voice effects add to the fun. Similar to: *Cabal*, *Dynamite Duke*, and *Operation Wolf*. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Neo Turf Masters

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Nazca. Sports/Golf, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1996.

One of two golf games for the Neo Geo (the other being the adequate, but lesser *Top*

Players Golf), *Neo Turf Masters* lets players select from six nicely animated golfers, each rated according to driving, accuracy, skill, recovery, and putting. Standard shots are viewed from behind the golfer, but the perspective switches to overhead once the ball has been hit into play. Putting is viewed from overhead as well. Swing strength and direction are determined by timing button presses in accordance with a typical-for-the-genre meter, and players have some control over hooking and slicing (by pressing B and C). There are four lush, beautifully rendered golf courses (USA, Germany, Japan, and Australia), and players can select their own club with each shot (though the computer does make recommendations in this regard). Wind direction is a factor, as is placement of such obstacles as water, trees, roughs, and sand traps. Modes of play include Stroke and Match. Peppy music and fast, arcade-style gameplay make *Neo Turf Masters* stand out from the pack. Unfortunately, it's very hard to find. Also released for the Neo Geo Pocket Color and Neo Geo CD.

Ninja Combat

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Characterized by cheap hits, poor collision detection, laughable text, uninspired backgrounds, and poor animation, *Ninja Combat* is an early Neo Geo title, and it shows. Players guide one of several large, garishly outfitted ninjas through seven levels of a modern setting, throwing shuriken at bowmen, ninja bad guys, cheerleaders, werewolves, bosses (including a screen-filling baddie whose hands must be chopped off again and again), and other enemies. Players can jump (though it's seldom used), pull off special attacks, grab speed, health, and power items, and pick up swords, clubs, axes, and other weapons. Defeating certain foes unlocks them as playable characters, but, for reasons unknown, they cannot use the weapon pick-ups. The poorly programmed nature of the game has players using weaponry in near constant fashion, with the grating noise caused by said weapons drowning out virtually all other sounds. The game is tough (in a

bad way), but the evil necessity of unlimited continues makes it less daunting than it could have been. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Ninja Commando

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

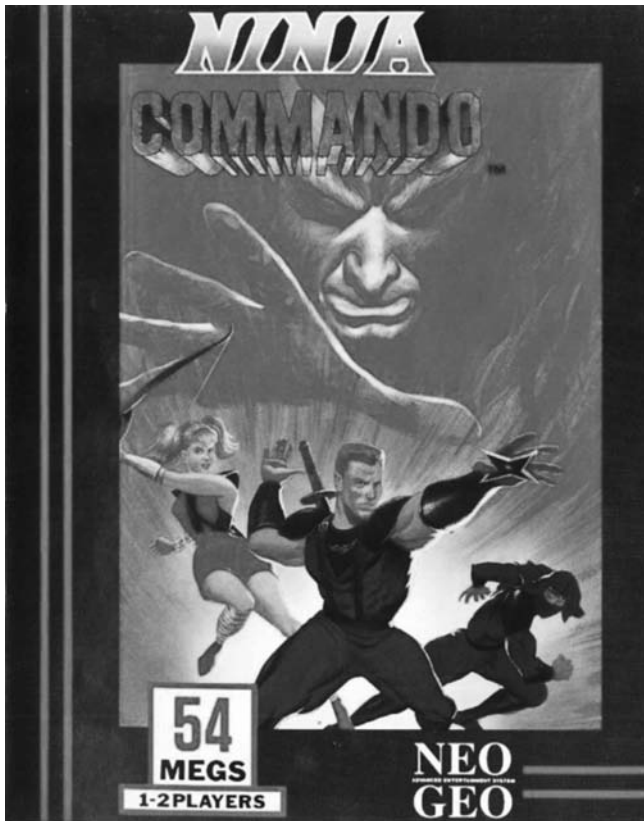
A shooter in the mold of *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*, *Ninja Commando* has players guiding one of three characters up the screen (the view is from overhead), firing away at soldiers, lions, mummies, sumo wrestlers, dinosaurs, tanks, and other enemies. There are three commandos from which to choose: Joe Tiger (American Ninja armed with throwing knives), Rayar Dragon (British female archer), and Ryu Eagle (Japanese ninja armed with flame shots). Projectiles can only be shot

straight ahead (up), and there is no backtracking. In addition to button-mashing action (constant firing is a must), players can somersault out of harm's way, unleash smart bomb-like special attacks, and collect scrolls for temporary invincibility. Areas to battle through include Mars, Primitive, Egypt, China, Japan, and Europe (World War II era). *Ninja Commando* is mindless fun and more than a little challenging. Between-level cut scenes, cool looking bosses (of the pattern-based variety), and poorly translated (i.e. unintentionally humorous) text add to the entertaining gameplay. Similar to: *The Ninja* (SMS). Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Ninja Master's

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

Similar to *Samurai Shodown*, *Ninja Master's* is a traditional, *Street Fighter II*-inspired, one-on-one fighting game, but with an interesting and unusual difference. Each of the 10 playable fighters is equipped with a weapon that can be sheathed or unsheathed at any time, changing the nature of certain combos and attacks. Fighters can lose their weapon as well, meaning it's important to develop good non-weaponry fighting techniques (button-mashing can yield good results, but experienced players will want to use some degree of strategy). Weapons and fighting moves are varied, from guns and knives to fireballs to different types of punches and kicks, and the game uses a power meter (for super combos and powered-up special moves) that evokes *The King of Fighters* to some degree. The brutal, hardcore fighting action is set against detailed background scenery, including cave walls, waterfalls, a ramshackle house, and a former battleground (as evi-



Fans of such games as *Front Line* (ColecoVision), *Rambo First Blood Part II* (SMS), and *Ikari Warriors* (NES) will enjoy *Ninja Commando*.

denced by discarded weaponry). This hard-to-find game was also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Rage of the Dragons

PUBLISHER: Playmore. DEVELOPER: Evoga.

Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2002.

Rage of the Dragons was intended to be an official follow-up to the Neo Geo version of *Double Dragon*, but the rights to the *Double Dragon* franchise were tied up by Million (creators of *Double Dragon Advance*), making the game an unofficial sequel of sorts. There are 14 playable, *Street Fighter II*-style characters, including Billy and Jimmy Lewis (as opposed to

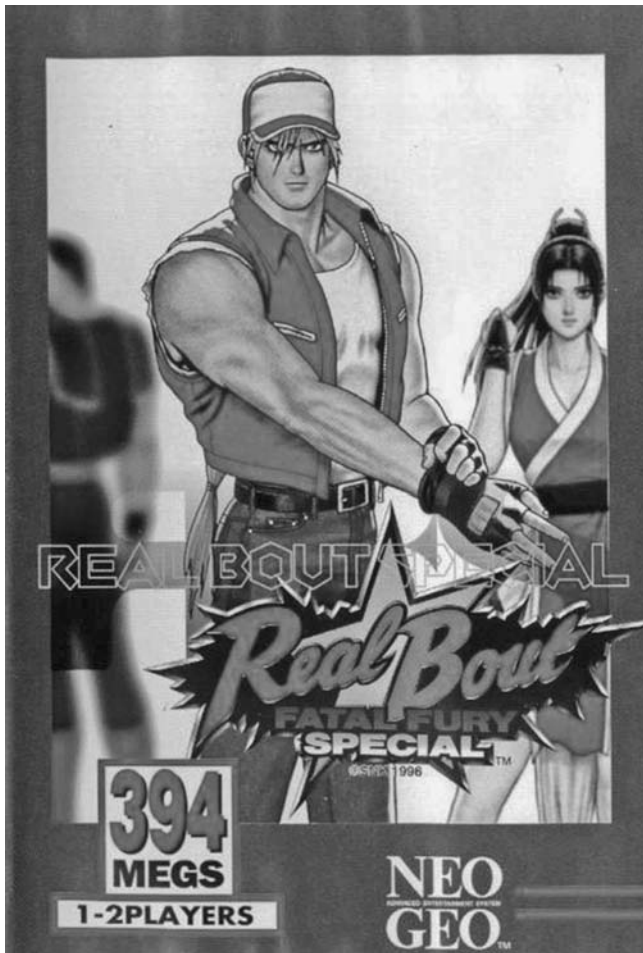
Double Dragon's Billy and Jimmy Lee). Players select two characters for tag-team action. While the active character is fighting, the inactive fighter's health will slowly recover. Combos can be performed by the duo fighting in tandem, and a special meter, when full, lets players perform super moves, counter attacks, and other such special moves. Standard moves include weak punch, strong punch, weak kick, strong kick, taunt, dash, retreat, counter attack, escape roll, and more. At the end of the single-player tournament, there are boss battles against Johann and Abobo, the latter patterned after Abobo from the original *Double Dragon*.

Real Bout Fatal Fury

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK.

Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

The fifth game in the *Fatal Fury* series (after *Fatal Fury 3: Road to the Final Victory*), *Real Bout Fatal Fury* returns Geese Howard to his role as the game's final boss (as seen in the original *Fatal Fury*). There are 13 fighters to select from, including Terry Bogard, Mai Shiranui, Duck King, Billy Kane and Kim Kaphwan. The three-line system returns from *Fatal Fury 3*, meaning fighters can pop into the background and foreground briefly to avoid attacks or to perform cross-line leaping attacks. A special power meter, when charged up, lets players perform desperation and super desperation moves. New to the 2D fighting genre are ring-outs (as seen in such 3D titles as *Virtua Fighter*), which occur when a barrier at either edge of the ring is broken and one of the fighters is thrown or hit out of the ring. In addition, successful attacks and defense maneuvers fill a power gauge that enables players to perform guard cancels (counterattacks after blocking an oppo-



Real Bout Fatal Fury Special is the sixth game in the popular *Fatal Fury* series of fighting games and the second to sport the *Real Bout* name.

ment's attack), super special moves (a more powerful special move), and hidden abilities (even more powerful than super special moves). Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Real Bout Fatal Fury Special

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1997.

The follow-up to *Real Bout Fatal Fury*, *Real Bout Fatal Fury Special* is the sixth game in the *Fatal Fury* series and the second to sport the *Real Bout* name. The two-line fighting system returns from the first three *Fatal Fury* games, meaning players can fight (and stay) in the foreground and background and switch between them at any time (there is no middle plane). Barriers return from *Real Bout Fatal Fury*, but there are no ring-outs (attacking a fighter while also breaking the barrier makes that fighter dizzy). Desperation and super desperation moves return, as does Geese Howard, who died in the previous game, but is now a playable character after being unlocked. When hidden characters are taken into account, the game features more than 20 fighters, including Terry Bogard, Duck King, Tung Fu Rue, Cheng Sinzan, Billy Kane, Laurence Blood, and Wolfgang Krauser, each of whom can perform break shot (hit opponents during their attack) and roll recovery (attack immediately after being knocked to the ground) maneuvers. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Real Bout Fatal Fury 2: The Newcomers

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1998.

The follow-up to *Real Bout Fatal Fury Special*, *Real Bout Fatal Fury 2: The Newcomers* is the seventh game in the *Fatal Fury* series and the third to sport the *Real Bout* name. The game features 22 playable fighters, including Geese Howard and "newcomers" Lia Xiang Fei, a petite female Asian martial arts expert who throws fireballs, and Rick Strowd, a boxer who can punch extra hard. The two-line fighting system from *Real Bout Fatal Fury Special* has been altered as players now fight in a single plane, but can briefly use a second plane to avoid attacks. Certain stages feature new art,

certain stages are one-plane only, and the breakable edge barriers have been removed. Fans of the *Fatal Fury* series will find little to complain about here, except for maybe a sense of sameness. Also released for the Neo Geo CD. Followed by: *Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* (arcade, PSX) and *Garou: Mark of the Wolves* (arcade, Neo Geo).

Riding Hero

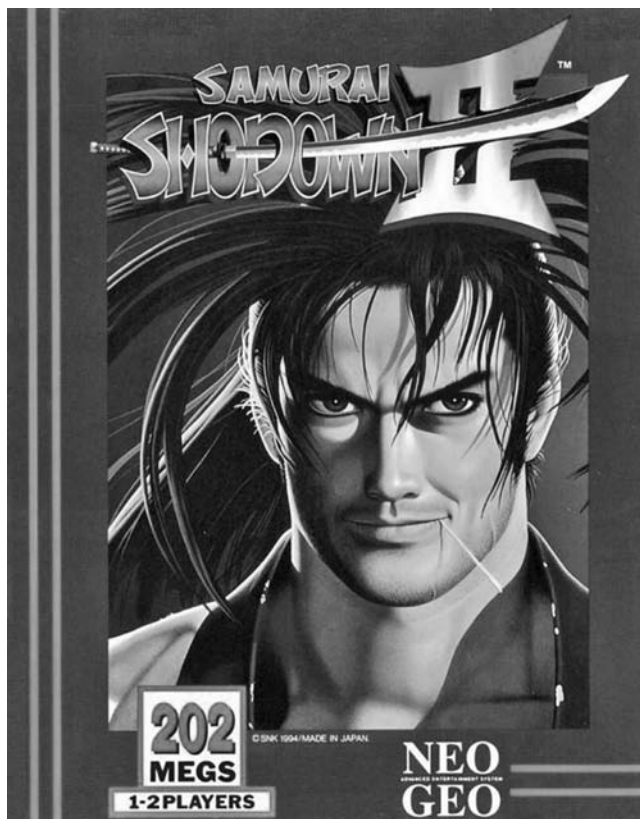
PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Motorcycle Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Riding Hero is similar to Sega's *Hang On*, but with a Career mode that lets players talk to people, follow a storyline, and earn money for use in purchasing better motorcycles. Controls are simple (lean right, lean left, brake, accelerate, turbo boost), but staying on the track can prove difficult. Getting bumped from behind by an enemy biker can be downright annoying, and there are cars and trucks that are a challenge to pass. The two-player mode requires two Neo Geo consoles, two TV sets, and a link cable attaching two cartridges. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Robo Army

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Robo Army is a *Final Fight*-style brawler in which players guide a cyborg through a post-apocalyptic world, punching, kicking, and using special attacks (of the one-button-press variety) against an army of robots (including dogs and gorillas) created by a mad scientist. Large characters (especially bosses), detailed (if unoriginal) backgrounds, and repetitious enemies epitomize the game, as does the ability for players to use dismembered robot limbs as weapons. Gamers will also jump, throw items (including vehicles), battle a jeep, and turn into a car that can mow down robots. There are six areas to battle through: Jungle, Highway, Main Street, Police Station, Factory, and Jeed Tower. The gameplay could use some tightening up (*Robo Army* is no *Streets of Rage*), but the action is mindlessly enjoyable, at least for a while. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.



Samurai Shodown II is similar to *Street Fighter II*, but fighters get to use weapons.

Samurai Shodown

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Although it borrows the basic one-on-one structure of *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*, *Samurai Shodown* is a highly original game, thanks to its innovative use of weaponry. Each of the game's 12 fighters (including ronin, ninjas, and a fencer) has a different weapon, such as a sword, a katana, or even a pet that can be sent on the attack. There are also a number of non-weapons maneuvers (which come in handy when the player has been disarmed), such as various punches, kicks, and special moves. Exciting, engaging, and extremely popular among Neo Geo owners, *Samurai Shodown* includes a special POW rage meter that fills incrementally with each hit taken. When it's full, the fighter will become temporarily more powerful, helping make comebacks pos-

sible. Nice character graphics, animated backgrounds, and excellent sound effects add to the fun. The Genesis and Sega CD versions are missing the character Earthquake, an American ninja. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, SNES, Neo Geo CD, and 3DO, the latter version being the only one to contain the death animations and red blood from the original Japanese game.

Samurai Shodown II

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The extreme popularity of the original *Samurai Shodown* made sequels inevitable. The first, *Samurai Shodown II*, keeps the weapons-based formula intact, but polishes things up a bit with better graphics, crisper controls, and the ability to pull off a super move when the POW meter is full. In addition, players can now roll forward and backward, block enemy attacks, taunt the other fighters,

and duck and jump to avoid high and low attacks respectively. Tam Tam, a Maya hero from Mexico, has been removed, but there are several new playable characters, including: Cham Cham (the catlike sister of Tam Tam); Neinhalt Siegar (who wields a gauntlet gun); Nicotine Caffeine (a monk); and Genjuro Kibagami (who wields a katana). A new female boss, Rashojin Mizuki, is also introduced, and hidden boss Kuroko (the judge sitting in the background during matches) is now playable. In short, *Samurai Shodown II* is even better than the original game. Both feature art by some of the animators who worked on *Ninja Scroll*, a 1993 anime film. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Samurai Shodown III: Blades of Blood

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Like the first two games in the series, *Samurai Shodown III* is a weapons-based fighter. However, it adds a new feature in which each playable character has two selectable versions: Slash, who is essentially the standard character, and Bust, who is basically the evil version of the character (for example, Nakoruru's animal companion is a hawk in Slash mode and a wolf in Bust mode). The animation is smoother this time around, but the overall atmosphere is darker. Certain characters, including Cham Cham and Earthquake, are missing, but there are several new ones, including: Shizumaru Hisame, who wields an umbrella; Gaira Caffeine, the nephew of Nicotine; and Rimururu, who battles using ice. All the previously existing characters have been redesigned, and there are now three difficulty levels: novice (with automatic blocking), intermediate (standard), and advanced (continual fully charged power bar, but no blocking). One complaint with the game is that certain characters can pull off stronger attacks than others, making it rather unbalanced. *Samurai Shodown III* is a fine game, but it falls a bit short of its progenitors. Also released for the Neo Geo CD and PlayStation.

Samurai Shodown IV: Amakusa's Revenge

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

In *Samurai Shodown IV*, Slash and Bust options return from the previous game, as does the trio of difficulty levels. There are now 17 playable fighters (up from 12 in *SS III*), including veterans Charlotte, Tam Tam, and Jubei Yagyu, along with newcomers Kazuki Kazama (fire jutsu expert) and Sogetsu Kazama (water jutsu expert). Air blocking has been removed, as has the ability to charge up your power meter at will. Also, bombs, food, and other objects are no longer thrown into the arena. New features include: *Mortal Kombat*-style fatalities; a timer for single-player mode; the ability to forfeit a round (by committing "suicide") and start the next round with a full POW gauge; and taunting the other player by purposely getting rid of your weapons. *Samurai*

Shodown IV is brighter and more cartoonish than *SS III*, but it still looks fantastic. Overall, it's an excellent game that fans of the series can be proud of. Also released for the Neo Geo CD. Followed by: *Samurai Shodown! 2* (NGPC), *Samurai Shodown 64* (arcade), and *Samurai Shodown: Warriors Rage* (PSX).

Samurai Shodown V

PUBLISHER: SNK Playmore. DEVELOPER: Yuki Enterprise. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2003.

Released late in the life of the Neo Geo, *Samurai Shodown V* marked the return of the series after a seven-year hiatus. The weapons-based fighting action is similar to previous games, but the Slash and Bust system has been removed (though some fans complain that remnants of the Bust mode were simply replaced by certain new characters). Also removed are fatalities, combo slashes, and sidestepping. A new defense button lets players duck, roll, jump back quickly, or jump forward quickly. Positioned beneath the health bar is a sword spirit gauge that drains when the player performs fighting moves, but refills with inactivity. The fuller the gauge, the stronger the attack. When low on health during the final round of a match, players can slow down time for their opponent. Graphically, *SS V* is a bit disappointing since it came out much later than previous games, but doesn't take the expected leap forward. Regardless, this is a nice looking game that fighting fans will enjoy. In the English language story mode, the dialogue scenes have been removed. The game was also released for the Xbox, but with the dialogue scenes restored and translated to English. Followed by: *Samurai Shodown Anthology* (PSP, PS2, Wii), which includes the previously Japan-only *Samurai VI*, and *Samurai Showdown Sen* (Xbox 360).

Savage Reign

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Savage Reign is a tournament-style game in the mold of *Street Fighter II*, but it does add an interesting design element. Each stage contains an upper level (which is in the back-

ground a bit) and a lower level that players can fight on and jump up and down to, creating some fun fighting strategies to employ, such as knocking an item from the top level to the bottom in order for it to hit your opponent. In addition, each of the game's 10 large, selectable characters is armed with a weapon that can be thrown, such as a ball, a boomerang, a discus, an axe, or a hammer. The camera zooms in and out to follow the fast, hard-hitting action, and the graphics are colorful and detailed (though the animation is choppy). Borrowing a page from *World Heroes*, button-taps result in light punches and kicks while pressing them harder produces stronger attacks. *Savage Reign* won't make anyone forget *Fatal Fury* or *The King of Fighters*, but it's a decent entry in the genre. Followed by: *Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle*, which added tag-team fighting to the mix. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Sengoku

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Sengoku is a mundane button-masher in terms of basic gameplay, but it does have some cool features, including the ability to obtain three assistant characters: a sword-swinging samurai, a somersaulting ninja, and a wolf that can unleash spin attacks. In addition, grabbing color-coded orbs lets players temporarily wield a sword or fireballs (which are much more effective than punches). Certain enemies enter the playfield in interesting ways, such as from the distant background or from the mouth of a giant skull. The objective is to fend off an evil warlord and his legion of followers (all the enemies in one area must be defeated before players can move on), and there is one button for jumping and one for attacking (pressing the button multiple times unleashes a punch-and-kick combo). The protagonist shuffles his feet when he walks, and the action is slow and clunky, but challenging: you'll need those unlimited continues. The action takes place in war-torn Japan and in an alternate dimension comprised of clouds and caves. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Sengoku 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Like the original *Sengoku*, *Sengoku 2* has players punching and kicking their way through a bevy of baddies (all the enemies in one area must be defeated before players can move on). However, the three assistant characters (which are useable for up to 60 seconds) are now selectable from the beginning. The trio includes a staff-wielding warrior, a fast female ninja, and a spin-attacking wolf. The graphics are more detailed this time out, the controls are more responsive, and the game is easier and a little faster. Players begin the game armed with a sword and can grab orbs dropped by enemies to supplement their armory with projectile attacks. Once again, the action takes place in two types of areas: normal and otherworldly. The music and graphics evoke Japanese ambience (at least a video game version of it) quite effectively. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Sengoku 3

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Noise Factory. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2001.

Released a decade after the original *Sengoku*, *Sengoku 3* is much different than the first two games in the series. Players can no longer switch to assistants during the action, but four selectable characters are now available from the beginning: a staff-wielding monk; a Japanese samurai who uses a katana and lightning; a Spanish knight who brandishes a sword and ninja arts of fire; and a female samurai bearing double blades and nature winds. After beating the first three levels (which are selectable in terms of order to play them), two playable bosses join the forces of good, making for a varied hacking, slashing, punching, kicking, projectile-hurling experience. There are five standard levels, plus a hidden level. One big addition to the series is that gamers can now chain together combos and special attacks for extra points. Grabbing treasures also scores bonus points. To unleash a special attack, the

rage meter must be filled. Enemies to battle include zombie soldiers, samurai, lady assassins, toads, dogs, buzzards, flying heads, and more. *Sengoku 3* is the best game in the trilogy.

SNK vs. Capcom: SVC Chaos

PUBLISHER: SNK Playmore. DEVELOPER: SNK Playmore. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 2003.

A sequel to such games as *Capcom vs. SNK* (Dreamcast) and *Capcom vs. SNK Pro* (PSX), *SVC Chaos* features gameplay similar to SNK's *The King of Fighters 2002*, but without the Team Battle format. Rather, the game offers the more traditional one-on-one, tournament-style brawls. Fighting fans know the routine: punch, kick, block, pull off special moves, etc. One new move is the front grand step, which lets players jump toward their opponent and cancel into a basic attack. Also new is a three-tiered groove power gauge system that lets players pull off super special moves. Tons of characters are featured, including SNK's Terry Bogard (*Fatal Fury*), Ryo Sakazaki (*Art of Fighting*), and Earthquake (*Samurai Shodown*); and Capcom's Ryu and Ken (*Street Fighter*), Chun-Li (*Street Fighter II*), and Dan Hibiki (*Street Fighter Alpha*). A nice looking game with a solid fighting system, *SNK vs. Capcom: SVC Chaos* will appeal to most anyone looking to engage in some big-name, crossover-company brawling. Also released for the Xbox. Released the same year as *Capcom vs. SNK 2: EO* (Xbox). Followed by: *SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS* (Nintendo DS).

Soccer Brawl

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Soccer/Futuristic, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Soccer Brawl is a fast, but less-than-fun take on the popular sport. The overhead view camera (which shows players from the side) is too close to the action, meaning it's usually hard to tell exactly where the goal is in relation to the player kicking the ball. In addition, the ball goes out of bounds too much, and the controls could use a kick in the pants in terms of responsiveness. The futuristic, seven-on-seven

action lets players punch, tackle, and shoot (via laser beam) one another, and holding down a button charges the power meter, which enables gamers to kick the ball hard enough to knock over the other players. The game uses a mere two buttons for shots, passes, slide tackles, overhead kicks, and diving headers, and this control scheme does take some getting used to. There are eight teams from which to choose, each populated with large characters sporting oddly colored uniforms. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Spinmaster

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Data East. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

With its over-the-top gameplay, outlandish sense of humor, nonstop action, and constant influx of enemies, *Spinmaster* is similar to *Metal Slug* (which was released in 1996, meaning *Spinmaster* is anything but a copycat), but is easier and bit more whimsical. Players guide a cartoonish, big-headed boy through an airport, jungles, caves, ancient ruins, and other areas (settings include Egypt, China, Rome, and the Amazon), slinging a yoyo at such enemies as terrorists, vultures, fish, turtles (which are similar to the Koopas in *Super Mario Bros.*), crabs, ghosts, and islanders. By opening chests, players can upgrade their weaponry to a boxing glove, bombs, throwing stars, ice, fire, and missiles, all of which can be charged up for extra power. In addition to running, jumping, and battling baddies, players will ride a riverboat, an elevator, and a runaway mine cart. Smooth animation, crisp controls, large characters, cool bosses, and colorful, richly detailed graphics add to the fun. This is one of the most enjoyable carts in the Neo Geo library.

Stakes Winner

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Saurus. Sports/Horse Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

This hard-to-find game puts players in the role of a jockey, riding a horse around a track, trying to beat seven other mounted horses to the finish line. The elevated 2D view is from

the side, but the game takes on more of an overhead perspective as the horses maneuver around turns in the track. There are eight horses to choose from, each rated according to speed, strength, and stamina (attributes can be improved upon by completing bonus rounds). The action feels a bit distant, but players do control the reins (for slight acceleration), the whip (for sharp acceleration), and immediate speed reduction. Players can also move their horse up and down and force their way past horses blocking their path. During races, various items appear on the track, including wings (speed boost), carrots (increased power), holes (brief loss of speed), and bottles (extended loss of speed). *Stakes Winner* is a decent game, but the superior sequel, *Stakes Winner 2*, was only released in the arcades and in Japan. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Street Hoop

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Data East. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

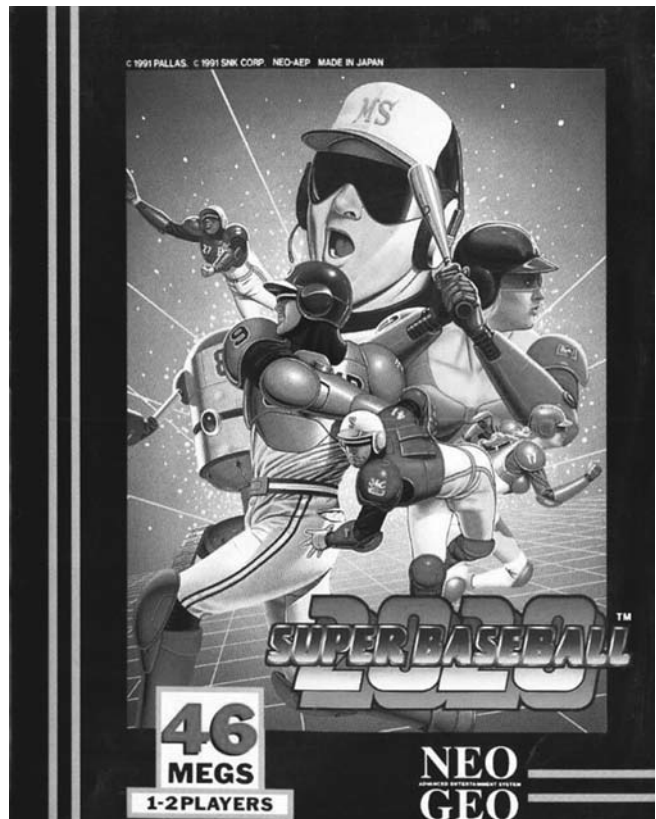
Street Hoop is a fast, fun, arcade-style basketball game in the mold of such titles as *NBA Jam* and *Arch Rivals*, but with larger characters. The three-on-three action lacks fouls and goal tending (a good thing in this case), but it does have a rocking hip-hop soundtrack and monster slam dunks. There are 10 U.S. teams from which to choose, each rated according to speed, defense, dunks, and three pointers. Hitting five shots fills the team's meter, making the next shot (from half court or closer) guaranteed to go in. In addition, players can elbow and punch one another and, best of all, run over a defender while charging to the basket for a dunk. The two-button controls make the game a breeze to pick up and play, but the computer A.I. can be uneven at times. Backgrounds, including urban and beach settings,

are animated, but the announcer can get annoying — his bored-sounding calls oftentimes don't match the onscreen action. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Super Baseball 2020

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Pallas. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

As with many baseball video games, *Super Baseball 2020* is viewed from behind the batter (the catcher's head is visible at the bottom of the screen), with an overhead angle kicking into gear once the ball is hit into play. Strike-outs, homers, and other trappings of America's pastime are included. However, the game is hardly your grandfather's baseball as robots of varying skill and ability are among the players (which are large and nicely animated) on the field. Other alterations include land mine obstacles (the late, great George Carlin would be



Super Baseball 2020 sports robot players, landmine obstacles, and other futuristic features.

proud), performance-enhancing body armor, and jump boosts for outrageous catches. Perhaps the biggest difference is the design of the stadium itself, which toys with the rules of homeruns and fair and foul territory. There are two different leagues and two modes of play: Single Match and League Mode. By making good plays, gamers can earn money to purchase upgraded armor and better human and robot players. Fatigue does come into play as humans wear out over time and robots eventually explode. Also released for the Neo Geo CD, SNES, and Genesis.

Super Sidekicks

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The simple, arcade-style *Super Sidekicks* lets players select from 12 different teams: France, Holland, Japan, Korea, USA, England, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Italy, Spain and Brazil. Though each team plays basically the same, initial player formation does vary. Two modes of play are available: SNK Cup, which is a single elimination tournament; and VS Mode, which lets gamers challenge another player. The view of the scrolling, horizontal field is from overhead, but the players (which are very nicely detailed) are shown from the side. While the gamer has the ball, an arrow pointing to the nearest teammate indicates where passes will go. While the gamer is on defense, the computer decides which player the gamer will control (usually the defenseman closest to the opposing ball carrier). Shoves and slide tackles are allowed, but excessive force can result in a penalty and a free kick. After a goal is scored, player and fan celebrations are shown. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Super Sidekicks 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

An improvement over the first game in the series, *Super Sidekicks 2* lets players select from 48 international teams, each rated according to kicking power, technique, defense, speed, and attack (each of which can be powered up by the player). There are now low and high passes, and

the computer no longer determines which player the gamer will control (pressing the C button switches control to the defender closest to the ball). The game also has crisper controls, richer graphics, and a camera that sometimes zooms in for a close-up of the action. During shots on goal, the perspective occasionally switches to behind-the-kicker, with the player guiding a crosshair to aim the shot. Curiously, the in-game music from *Super Sidekicks* has been removed. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Super Sidekicks 3: The Next Glory

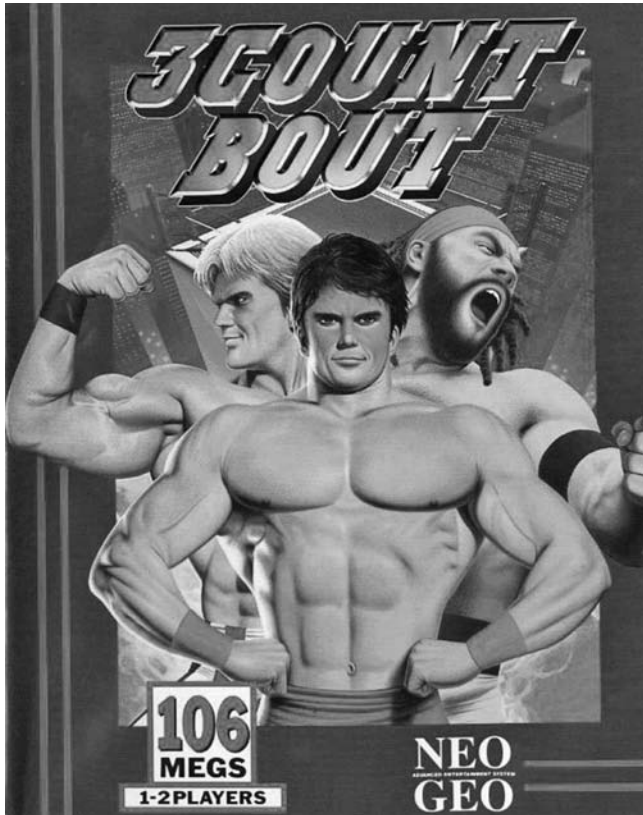
PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Super Sidekicks 3 looks, plays, and sounds a lot like *Super Sidekicks 2*, but does feature some minor changes, including regional tournaments and 64 selectable teams (each a part of a geographical region, such as Europe, Asia, America, South America, or Africa). Another minor new feature is the computer keeping track of each team's top goal scorer. As in SS2, each team is ranked according to kicking power, technique, defense, speed, and attack (each of which is upgradeable by the player). Once again, tackles, slide tackles, high and low passes, and penalty kicks are part of the simple (in a good way), arcade-style action. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

The Super Spy

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. First-Person Action, 1 player. 1991.

In *The Super Spy*, players guide a secret agent through a maze-like enemy base, using fists, feet, a knife, and a pistol to battle ninjas, mad scientists, muscle-bound thugs, and other enemies. The first-person viewpoint is from the perspective of the agent, meaning players can only see his arms, fists, feet (when kicking), and weapons. As the agent moves through various rooms, the action scrolls primarily to the left and right, but players can also go forward through doors and hallways. Ammunition is sparse, and the knife gets worn with use, meaning much of the game consists of punching and kicking. In addition to fighting, play-



The only wrestling game for the Neo Geo, *3 Count Bout* includes 10 playable fighters.

ers must rescue scientists, who show their gratitude by providing health, ammunition, information, knife sharpening, or submachine guns. The characters are large, showing off the power of the Neo Geo, and the tough, violent, arcade-style action does provide some short-term entertainment (repetition sets in pretty quickly). Similar to: *Crossed Swords*. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Thrash Rally

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Rally/Off-Road Racing, 1 player. 1991.

Although primitive looking and sounding (at least in comparison to most other Neo Geo titles), *Thrash Rally* is a fast, playable cartridge. At the helm of a sand buggy, an off-road bike, a semi truck, or one of several cars (each varying in handling, acceleration, and speed), gamers drive up various roadways, with the

overhead-view camera keeping pace. Turns are frequent (arrows warn of impending turns), power drifting is achieved by accelerating and braking at the same time, and obstacles come in the form of animals (including elephants, which make an interested noise when hit), water, bridges, trees, ramps, and other cars. Flyover planes provide some graphical flourish. Reaching checkpoints grants players additional time, and finishing in first place is important as well. Two modes of play are available: World Championship (season) and Dakar Paris. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

3 Count Bout

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Sports/Wrestling, 1 or 2 Players (simultaneous). 1993.

The only wrestling title in the Neo Geo library, *3 Count Bout* lets players select from 10 different fighters, each of which is equipped with a special move and a variety of traditional wrestling

maneuvers, including grabs, pins, punches, and kicks. Street matches allow fighters to wield baseball bats, tables, chairs, buckets, crates, and other weapons. Tag team matches are available, as is a one-player Championship Mode in which gamers fight to win money. Although it has nice graphics, *3 Count Bout* suffers from poor animation (thanks to a low frame rate) and frustratingly difficult gameplay. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

In *Top Hunter*, players guide Roddy or Cathy through four worlds (Fire, Ice, Wind, and Fire) and a boss-heavy final stage, using a retractable arm to punch enemies (including snow monsters, goggled gunmen, and other

cartoonish characters), grab and throw bad guys, pull up to higher platforms (à la *Bionic Commando*), pull rings (for unleashing time bonuses, jewels, and other items), and flip switches (for performing such tasks as knocking over walls). From time to time players will commandeer robots, jump over gaps, and use weapons. With the mere press of a button, players can switch their character between the background and foreground, which can be useful in dodging enemies, avoiding boulders, and the like. Most of the time is spent punching enemies (weapons are few and far between), which is fairly entertaining, but lacking in comparison to such weapons-intensive games as *Metal Slug* and *Spinmaster*. Like those two titles, *Top Hunter* does have nice graphics and an engaging sense of humor. Continues are unlimited, which may tempt some players to just button-mash their way through the game with

little regard for their health. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Top Player's Golf

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: SNK.

Sports/Golf, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

Top Player's Golf lets gamers select from four golfers, two courses, and three modes of play: Stroke, Match, and Nassau. A caddy is on hand to offer advice (sometimes useless, oftentimes contradictory), giving the game tons of voice effects. Players view the course from a limited overhead perspective (only a small portion of the course is visible at any one time), but during swings the golfer, viewed from behind, appears on the left side of the screen. Golfing involves positioning a cursor on the course and then using a simple two-tap swing meter to hit the ball, letting players determine

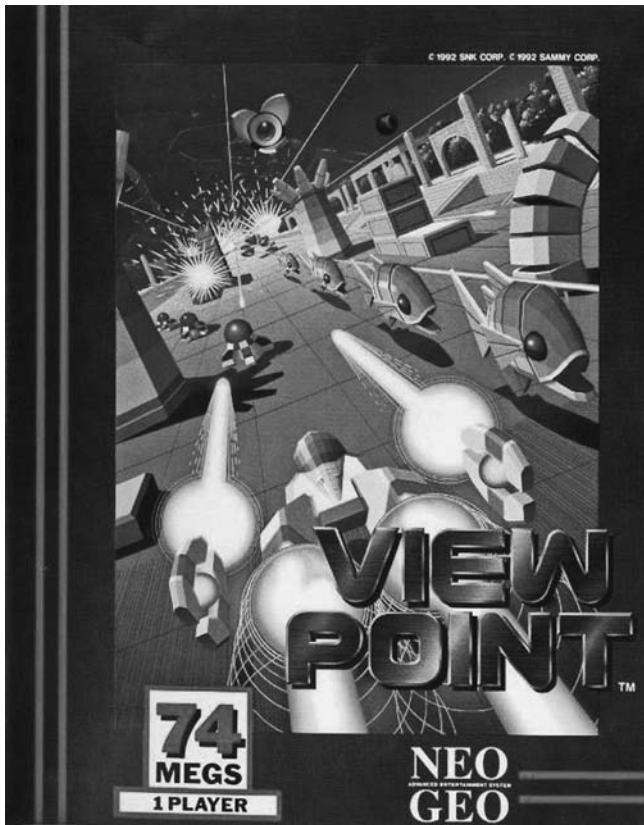
the power of the shoot and whether to hook or slice the ball or hit it straight. The courses are typical for the genre, offering such hazards as trees, sand, and water. Text appearing in boxes displays such information as stroke number, hole number, hole length, shots needed for par, and number of yards to the hole. Ill-fitting, patience-testing music plays throughout. *Top Player's Golf* is playable, but inferior to *Neo Turf Masters* (the Neo Geo's other golf title). Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Viewpoint

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER:

Sammy. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

This isometric-perspective game plays a lot like the coin-op classic *Zaxxon* (1982), with gamers flying diagonally over outer space landscapes, seas, and mechanized areas, shooting lasers, firebombs, homing bombs, and shockwaves at such alien invaders as tanks, ships, gun turrets,



Viewpoint, which was also released for the Genesis and PlayStation, is similar to the arcade classic *Zaxxon*.

bosses, and robotic worms, crabs, and fish. Thanks to the game's "viewpoint," it's often-times difficult to tell where the player's ship is in relation to the obstacles and enemies (unlike *Zaxxon*, which suffered this problem to a lesser degree, there is no altitude meter), but the game is an entertaining challenge nevertheless. In *Electronic Gaming Monthly's* 1993 *Video Game Buyer's Guide*, *Viewpoint* was awarded Best Music in a Cartridge-Based Game, a distinction the title certainly deserves. The issue also honored *Viewpoint* as having the best graphics among games for all systems. Also released for the Genesis, Neo Geo CD, and PlayStation.

Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Technos. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer lets players select from 10 different fighters, including a magician, a super-hero, a four-armed robot, and two scantily clad females. Each character can punch and kick and pull off a number of special moves (some of which are downright nutty), including shoulder charge, burning slash, stick attack, captain cyclone, aerial throw, fire tube, death from above, dance of death, and/or bite attack. Defeating an opponent lets players take one of their special moves, but acquiring another eliminates the previously taken special move. The game has large (some might say overly large) characters, frenetic (some might say too frenetic) fighting, a camera that zooms in and out, and busy, richly illustrated backgrounds, including a burning city, a concert stage, a mad scientist's lab, and a TV studio. The game, which borrows from *Art of Fighting* and *Fatal Fury* (but is inferior to both), spawned an anime series, which is not surprising given its anime-style introductory sequence. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Windjammers

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: Data East. Sports/Frisbee Tennis, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Viewed from overhead, the fast, furious, and fun *Windjammers* evokes the simple game-

play of *Pong*, but is actually based on the sport of Frisbee tennis. Each player maneuvers their character on their side of a horizontal court, tossing a flying disc back and forth across a low net. There are two types of throws—regular and lob—plus some special moves, including one that sets the Frisbee on fire. Quick catch-and-throws add speed to the disc while *Street Fighter II*-style sweeping motions put a curve on the disc. Six characters are available, each with his own court and skill set. Courts range from beach to high-tech, and some contain obstacles. The objective is to throw the disc into the goals positioned behind the other player (causing the other player to miss the disc also scores points). Mini-games include Frisbee bowling and playing fetch with a dog (the player throws the disc, and then guides the dog to catch it). Similar to: *Battle Flip Shot* (arcade, 1998). Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

World Heroes

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Obviously influenced by *Street Fighter II*, *World Heroes* is indeed derivative of Capcom's aforementioned classic, right down to similar character designs (eight in all) and special moves (such as fire balls and dragon punches). However, it does have a memorable Death Match mode in which mines, spikes, fire, and other obstacles play an important role, making for some interesting fighting strategies. Unfortunately, the game also employs an unusual control technique in which button taps perform light punches and kicks while holding the buttons down makes for stronger attacks. This causes a delay in response time since the computer has to determine which type of move is being executed. Also released for the Genesis, SNES, and Neo Geo CD.

World Heroes Perfect

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

As with *World Heroes 2 Jet*, *World Heroes Perfect* (the fourth game in the series) lacks the popular, obstacle-filled Death Match mode from *World Heroes* and *World Heroes 2*. What it

does offer is a special hero gauge that, when fully powered up, allows fighters to pull off extra powerful attacks while sustaining less damage from being hit. Even better, the control scheme has been redesigned, assigning buttons A and B to light and medium punches and C and D to light and medium kicks. Holding down either pair of buttons results in stronger attacks, but tapping is no longer a factor. The 16 playable characters are all from the previous three games. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

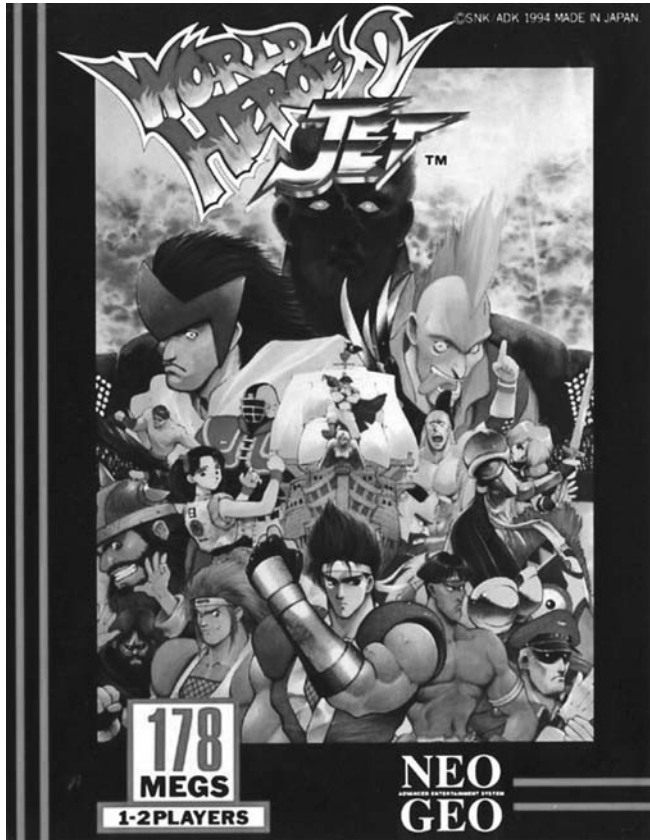
World Heroes 2

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Worlds Heroes 2 plays a lot like the original *World Heroes*, including the same type of flawed (if somewhat tightened up) control system. It does offer lots of new fighting moves, six new playable characters (for a total of 14), and vastly improved background graphics. Some changes to the popular Death Match mode have been made as well, such as the inclusion of circular saws (and other new obstacles) and a different health bar setup. There is now just one health bar extending across the screen, and with each hit the player takes, the bar moves toward their side of the screen. Once the bar has reached a player's side, that player can try to recover (up to two times) by pushing buttons quickly. Also released for the SNES and Neo Geo CD.

World Heroes 2 Jet

PUBLISHER: SNK. DEVELOPER: ADK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.



World Heroes 2 Jet is a fine fighter, but, unfortunately, it does not include the Death Match mode from the first two games in the series.

The sequel to *World Heroes 2*, *World Heroes 2 Jet* makes the mistake of taking away the Death Match mode from the first two games in the series and replacing it with a pointless Forging of the Warrior mode in which players select four different fighters to battle (one at a time, of course). Two new playable characters have been added, making for a total of 16, and these new guys are quite powerful. The controls, graphics, and sound effects have been fine tuned a bit, and there are now taunts and fake dizzies, the latter of which can be used to trick the other player. Also released for the Game Boy and Neo Geo CD.

SEGA GENESIS

The follow-up to the Sega Master System, which was trounced by the Nintendo NES during the 8-bit system wars of the mid- to late 1980s, the Sega Genesis was released on August 14, 1989, in Los Angeles and New York, and by mid-September of the same year was seen on store shelves across the country. The Genesis is the American version of the Mega Drive, which was released in Japan in 1988.

Debuting at a retail price of \$189.99, the

Genesis was originally packaged with one controller and a stunning rendition of *Altered Beast*, Sega's 1988 coin-op hit. With its large characters, colorful graphics, and smooth, arcade-like animation, *Altered Beast* convinced consumers that the Genesis was a quantum technological leap ahead of the Master System and the NES. In addition to *Altered Beast*, the Genesis launched alongside the following titles: *Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle*, *Ghouls'n Ghosts*, *Last Battle*, *Space Harrier II*, *Thunder Force II*, and *Tommy Lasorda Baseball*.

An early peripheral called the Power Base Converter plugged into the Genesis cartridge slot, allowing gamers to play Master System titles on their shiny new 16-bit console. Other notable peripherals for the Genesis include: the Justifier light gun; the Menacer light rifle; two different multi-tap adapters (Sega's Team Player



Known as the Mega Drive in Japan, the Sega Genesis was Sega's 16-bit follow-up to the Sega Master System. The Genesis was released in 1989, two years before the Super Nintendo. Pictured is the second iteration of the system, packaged with *Sonic Spinball*.

and EA's 4 Way Play); a six-button controller (which was key for many fighting games); the Sega Mega Mouse; a plastic baseball bat (BatterUP); a plastic golf club (TeeVGolf); and the infamous, notoriously unresponsive Sega Activator, which was a flat, octagonal arena of sorts that players stood in and moved their bodies to control the onscreen action.

The TurboGrafx-16 was released the same year as the Genesis, and it was a neat system with some great games. Unfortunately, thanks to a lack of third-party support (among other factors), the console, after a decent launch, failed to provide much competition for the Genesis. The pricey Neo Geo hit stores in 1989 as well. In terms of sales and popularity in general, the Genesis soundly trounced both of its initial competitors.

In August of 1991, Nintendo released the follow-up to their ubiquitous NES console. Known as the Super Famicom in Japan, the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (a.k.a. SNES or Super NES) was a fierce competitor with the Genesis, kick-starting the most intense console war since the ColecoVision versus the Atari 5200 during the early 1980s.

The Super Nintendo boasted a richer color palette than the Genesis (32,768 colors available compared to 512), along with superior sound technology and more graphical effects capabilities (such as Mode 7 texture mapping that allowed for rotating and scaling backgrounds). However, the Genesis had a faster processor (68000 versus 65816) and higher processing speed (7.6 MHz compared to 3.58 MHz), resulting in such lightning-quick games as the *Sonic the Hedgehog* series.

When the original *Sonic the Hedgehog* hit the Genesis in June of 1991, the game was rightly perceived as a faster, edgier answer to Nintendo's Mario. *Sonic the Hedgehog*, which replaced *Altered Beast* as the pack-in title with the system, helped make the Genesis seem cooler than the Super Nintendo, especially among teenage boys. Sega's popular advertising campaign (who can forget "Sega does what Nintendo can't?"), along with their release of *Mortal Kombat* with blood and fatalities intact (via a "blood code"), only added to the system's cachet of coolness.

When *Mortal Kombat II* followed, the Genesis and SNES versions both featured blood and fatalities without the necessity of entering a code, but the SNES version had better graphics and sounds. Ultimately, both the Genesis and the SNES sold extremely well and had their fair share of great games. To this day, however, hardcore Nintendo fans and Sega purists alike will argue over which was the superior system.

In October of 1992, Sega released the Sega CD, a CD-ROM drive that was an add-on to the Genesis console, meaning it couldn't function without a Genesis. Originally priced at \$299, the Sega CD sat directly beneath the Genesis console and featured a front-loading CD tray. A top-loading iteration of the peripheral was also released.

These days, the Sega CD is often derided for its grainy (not to mention cheesy) full-motion video titles, but it was home to a number of excellent games as well, including *Earth Worm Jim: Special Edition*, *Final Fight CD*, *Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse*, and *Sonic CD*. (A complete listing of Sega CD games can be found in Appendix II near the back of this book).

The Sega CD was followed in 1994 by another Genesis add-on — the cartridge-based Sega 32X — which plugged into the top of the Genesis via the cartridge slot. Despite strong sales in the beginning, the 32X died a quick death due to a small library of games (including a few disc-based titles that required the Genesis, the Sega CD, and the 32X), a perceived lack of value for the money (most of the games didn't look all that much different from their Genesis counterparts), and the impending release of the next Sega console (ultimately called the Saturn).

The 32X initially sold for \$159.99, but by early 1996 was being dumped for as low as \$19.99. Standout 32X titles include *NBA Jam Tournament Edition*, *Spider-Man: Web of Fire* (noteworthy for its rarity), *Star Wars Arcade*, *Virtua Fighter*, and *Virtua Racing Deluxe*. (A complete listing of Sega 32X games, as well as Sega CD 32X titles, is in Appendix III near the back of this book).

Despite lukewarm reception to the Sega CD and the abject failure of the Sega 32X, the

Sega Genesis itself is a fondly remembered console with tons of great shooters, sports games, RPGs, and action titles. *Sonic the Hedgehog* remains popular, as evidenced by various classics collections and by the continuation of the series on modern consoles, and the system is a haven for armchair athletes, thanks to such franchises as Electronic Arts' *John Madden Football* and *NHL Hockey*.

With the release of the 32-bit PlayStation in 1995 and the 64-bit Nintendo 64 in 1996, the Genesis was increasingly seen as a previous-gen system and by 1997 was on its last legs. However, thanks to such online services as the Nintendo Wii Virtual Console, and thanks to *Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection* for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, today's consumer can enjoy the 16-bit thrills and spills of tons of Genesis games, including such awesome titles as *Golden Axe*, *Phantasy Star*, *Streets of Rage*, and *VectorMan*.

Better yet, dust off that Genesis in your closet (or get your bids in on eBay) and play the games in all their original glory on a vintage console using vintage controllers. After all, "Sega does what Nintendo'n't."

Sega Genesis Games

AAAHH!!! Real Monsters

Publisher: Viacom New Media. Developer: Realtime Associates. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

A nice take on the Nickelodeon cartoon series, *AAAHH!!! Real Monsters* finds Ickis,



Sega Genesis console, fully equipped with a 32X and a Sega CD, along with a standard controller. To help advertise the Genesis, Sega came up with the catchy tagline "Sega does what Nintendo'n't."

Krumm, and Oblina working as a team, searching for items and using scares and throwable trash to defeat junkyard dogs, school librarians, dinosaurs, radio-controlled tanks, and other enemies. Each of the monsters is selectable at any time, with the other two tagging along (à la *The Lost Vikings*), and each has a special triple monster move for jumping farther (over chasms and the like), searching for hidden rooms, or climbing tall obstacles. Levels include City Dump, Human School, Post Office, Natural History Museum, The Mall, and Monster Hunter's House, each filled with such obstacles as spewing sewage, falling packages, deep tar pits, or spiky cactuses. The levels also contain such useful constructs as springs, slides, levers (for opening doors), trampolines, conveyor belts, and toilets (for quick transportation). Also released for the SNES.

Action 52

Publisher: Active Enterprises. Developer: Far-Sight Technologies. Multi-Game Compilation, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

This unlicensed cartridge features 52 games, most of which are shoddy and poorly produced: Bonkers, Darksyne, Dyno Tennis, Ooze, Star Ball, Sidewinder, Daytona, 15 Puzzle, Sketch, Star Duel, Haunted Hill, Alfredo, The Cheetahmen, Skirmish, Depth Charge, Mind's Eye, Alien Attack, Billy Bob, Sharks, Knockout, Intruder, Echo, Freeway, Mouse-trap, Ninja, Slalom, Dauntless, Force One, Spidey, Appleseed, Skater, Sunday Drive, Star Evil, Air Command, Shootout, Bombs Away, Speed Boat, Dedant, G Fighter, Man At Arms, Norman, Armor Battle, Magic Bean, Apache, Paratrooper, Sky Avenger, Sharpshooter, Meteor, Black Hole, The Boss, First Game, and Challenge. Also released for the NES.

The Addams Family

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Ocean Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

The Addams Family for the Genesis is based on the 1991 feature film, which was based on the 1960s sitcom, which was based on Charles Addams' cartoon panels published in *The New Yorker* (from 1938 to 1988). Players guide the patriarch, Gomez, as he runs, jumps, and explores the Addams mansion, which includes such areas as Pugsley's Den, the Sports Hall, The Hat Room, Under the Graveyard, The Library, and The Old Tree. His goal is to locate family members Morticia, Pugsley, Wednesday, Granny, and Lurch. During the quest, Thing will provide hints, and Gomez will avoid traps, gather money, and jump on ghosts, skulls, mummies, jack-o-lanterns, and other enemies. In addition to jumping on monsters, Gomez will gain access to such weapons as a sword and golf balls. Other helpful items include spring boards, a propeller, invincibility, and more. The music is eerie, but repetitious, and the graphics are cartoonishly mediocre. The platforming action is fairly enjoyable (if largely unoriginal), and there are cool bosses and plenty of hidden areas, including places where Gomez can grab extra lives. Also released for the SNES.

The Adventures of Batman and Robin

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Clockwork Tortoise. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Based on the popular animated series, *The Adventures of Batman and Robin* oozes with graphical detail, but the frustratingly high level of difficulty makes the game hard to enjoy. Players guide Batman or Robin through 19 levels of play, using punches, kicks, Batarangs, and other weapons to battle countless clowns, scientists, thugs, and other enemies, including such far-famed super-villains as the Joker, Mad-Hatter, Two-Face, and Mr. Freeze. A two-player simultaneous mode lets one gamer play as Batman and the other as Robin (a feature missing from the otherwise superior SNES version), and there's even some side-scrolling shooter action via the Bat-Glider. Much different than the Sega CD rendition, which features Batmobile action and animated cut scenes.

The Adventures of Mighty Max

Publisher: Ocean Software. Developer: WJS Design. Adventure Puzzle/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Based on the cartoon series, *Mighty Max* (1993–1994), *The Adventures of Mighty Max* puts players in the titular role of a blonde boy wearing a red cap, blue jeans, and a white T-shirt. The time-traveling hero must traverse five timed, generically designed areas (Volcano, Space Station, Inca Ruins, Water, and Jungle), searching for hidden objects and transporting them to portals. Unfortunately, this is a difficult and tedious task. Armed with a ping-pong gun for warding off the various bats, sharks, Rock Monsters, and other enemies that populate the levels, Max can jump very high (unless he is carrying an item), and he can use such items as balloons, rafts, seesaws, and magnets to help him transport the objects to the portals. Max can also call on Norman (a Viking) and Virgil (an owl) for help. Gamers can opt to play as Felix or Bea, but gameplay remains essentially the same. A two-player split-screen mode lets gamers race to complete the objectives. Also released for the SNES.

The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends

Publisher: Absolute Entertainment. Developer: Imagineering. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale have stolen valuable items from the Rocky and Bullwinkle Museum, and it is up to Rocket “Rocky” J. Squirrel and his best friend, Bullwinkle J. Moose, to get them back. Rocky tosses nuts and spins his tail to battle enemies while Bullwinkle throws moose berries and bashes baddies (and rocks and other obstacles) with his head. Players guide both characters (one at a time), but Bullwinkle gets the majority of screen time. In addition to running, jumping, and confronting enemies (including ghosts, bats, rats, and a pirate boss), players climb a mountain, duck under birds, maneuver over a breaking bridge, explore a cave, negotiate moving platforms, ride in a boat and a mine cart, dodge spikes and electric chairs, and much more. There are only three levels (each with three stages), but the game does present a formidable challenge. In addition, there are two mini-games: Sherman must battle Mr. Peabody and a fire breathing dragon; and Dudley Do-Right must ride a horse and rescue Nell Fenwick from getting run over by a train. Also released for the SNES. Much different than the Game Boy and NES versions.

Aero the Acro-Bat

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

The release of *Sonic the Hedgehog* spawned a plethora of imitators, including the frustratingly difficult *Aero the Acro-Bat*, which stars a vampire bat as the game’s mascot/protagonist. Aero runs and jumps through four multi-stage worlds: a circus, an amusement park, the woods, and a museum. To battle the many clowns and other enemies (some of which unleash cheap hits), Aero executes a diagonal spin-jump attack, but iffy controls make this a less-than-reliable maneuver. Aero can throw stars at baddies, but these are limited. Aero will also climb ladders, dodge deadly spikes (which

can get frustrating), swim, blast out of a cannon, bungee jump, ride conveyor belts, walk across tightropes, glide through flaming hoops, ride roller coasters and log flumes, jump over chasms and on moving platforms, and more. The game moves at a rapid clip, levels have timed missions (such as “Jump on 7 Star Platforms”), and there is no save feature. *Aero the Acro-Bat* has nice animation and colorful visuals, but it can be a confidence killer. The SNES version has enhanced graphics and sounds and special Mode 7 skydiving bonus rounds. Also released for the Game Boy Advance.

Aero the Acro-Bat 2

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

In *Aero the Acro-Bat 2*, the title character leaves the circus confines of the original game, but must once again stop the evil industrialist clown, Edgar Ektor. There are 45 levels of play, including Bell Castle, Performer’s Dungeon, Disco Fever, and Ektor’s Engine (a final battle atop a train racing through hell). Fewer cheap spike obstacles mean less frustration, and the controls have been finely tuned, making this sequel superior to its progenitor (Aero still employs an angled spin attack, but he seems more agile). In addition, the graphics have been spruced up a bit, and there’s a new snowboarding stage and a fresh musical score. Variety is the order of the day in this *Sonic the Hedgehog*-inspired game as Aero swings from ringing bells, hops on trampolines, gets shot out of cannons, dodges obstacles (including fire and cymbals), grabs candy and stars, explores hidden areas, climbs ladders, jumps on spinning records, and more. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *Zero: The Kamikaze Squirrel*.

Aerobiz

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Business Simulator, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Sporting an unusual simulation scenario, *Aerobiz* puts players in the role of airline company CEO, performing such tasks as advertising to potential customers, setting budgets, de-

ciding where to locate the home office, selecting a company name, negotiating for open air routes, investing in hotels and branch offices, buying and selling aircraft (including such real-life planes as the Concorde and the Boeing 747), creating hubs, managing emergencies (including natural disasters), monitoring data, and much more. There are two scenarios from which to choose: 1963–1995 and 1983–2015. Long-term objectives include linking 22 cities with air routes, increasing profits, and meeting the required passenger quotas. A staff of business advisors, airplane attendants, negotiators, and others will help players achieve their goals. Also released for the SNES.

Aerobiz Supersonic

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Business Simulator, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

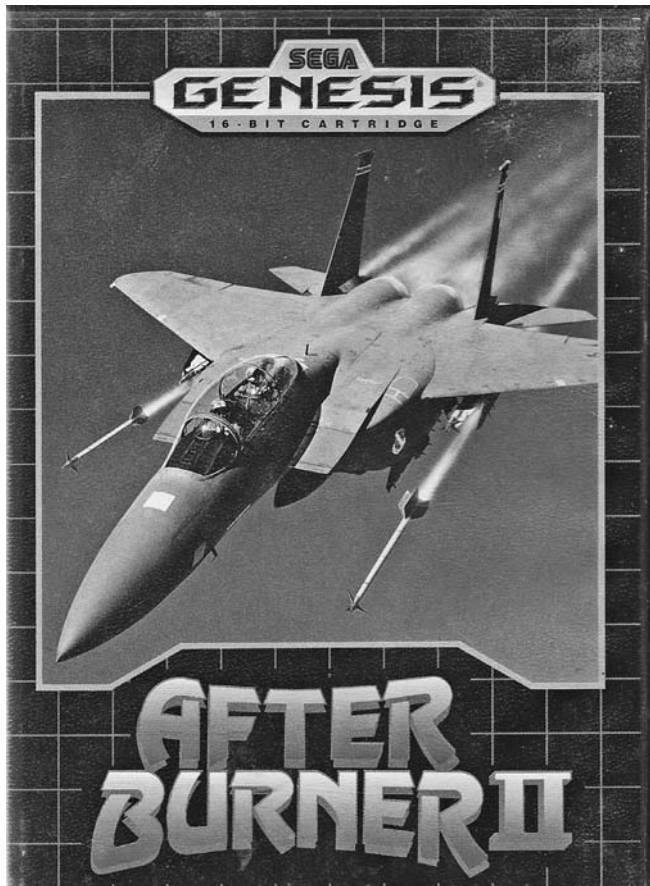
The sequel to *Aerobiz*, *Aerobiz Supersonic* is a resource management game in which you play the CEO of a newly formed airline. The objective is to survive, thrive, and ultimately make your company the foremost in its field. This involves: organizing routes to 89 international cities; maintaining your planes; advertising your services; establishing hub offices; tracking quarterly and annual sales reports; winning passengers away from competitors; dealing with such emergencies as war, natural disasters, plane crashes, and employee strikes; investing in such business ventures as hotels, branch offices, amusement parks, concert halls, ski resorts, and golf courses; and more. To form your fleet, there are more than 50 airplanes to choose from, including a Boeing 747, a DC-10, and even some fictional aircraft. There are four eras of aviation history to select from, two of which are futuristic. Gameplay is suitably detailed, but the graphics are merely average, depicting buildings, human faces, a world

map, lots of text, little windows displaying world landmarks, a rotating globe, and a view from the pilot's seat. Also released for the SNES.

After Burner II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

It goes without saying that Sega's 1987 arcade version of *After Burner II* has more spectacular audio/visual effects (bigger explosions, more detailed grounds, harder driving music), but this "little port that could" does about as good a job as you could hope for. Players pilot the Skycat, which is an F-14XX fighter jet equipped with a Vulcan 20 mm cannon that fires a constant barrage of shots, along with air-to-air guided missiles capable of taking out



After Burner II for the Genesis is a port of Sega's 1987 arcade game.

several enemies (jets, gunships, fighters, and the like) at once. The action is viewed from behind the fighter, which can speed up, slow down, fly upside down, and perform rolling maneuvers (which are frequently necessary for dodging enemies). The landing sequences from the arcade classic are missing, but the scaling effects are relatively smooth, and players will get a good sense of speed and will engage in plenty of intense and enjoyable shooting action. There are 22 stages of air combat to battle through (taking place over sand, snow, trees, water, and other terrain), plus a 23rd stage that takes players back to their base. Followed by: *After Burner III* (Sega CD), *After Burner Climax* (arcade), and *After Burner: Black Falcon* (PSP).

Air Buster

Publisher: Kaneko. Developer: Inter State.
Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A highly accurate port of Kaneko's 1990 arcade game, *Air Buster* sends players flying through a variety of levels, ranging from tunnels to mountains to outer space. The ship boasts rapid fire, flash fire, and a nice array of power-ups, including a buffer against the tunnel walls. There's even zero gravity action where the ship handles a bit more loosely than usual. Unlike such similar titles as *Thunder Force* and *Gaiques*, *Air Buster* allows for two-player simultaneous action. The TurboGrafx version of the game (called *Aero Blasters*) has a better musical score while the Genesis rendition has superior graphics.

Air Diver

Publisher: Seismic. Developer: Copya System.
Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1990.

Published by the folks behind the superior *Hellfire*, *Air Diver* puts players in the cockpit of a looping, rolling F-119 Stealth Fighter (though stealth doesn't really play a role), shooting ships that hail from outer space and the Middle East. The action, which is supplemented by a vibrant musical score, takes place over fairly pedestrian terrain (trees, dirt, rocks, and the like) during various times of day, with players using a Vulcan cannon and lock-on

missiles to destroy a certain number of enemies before running out of fuel. A map screen lets players select the area to defend next, but care should be taken not to choose a destination too far away since fuel is scarce. Taking damage affects the ship's capabilities, such as eliminating the use of the afterburner. Speaking of which, *Air Diver's* gameplay is similar to (but not as good as) the Sega arcade classic *After Burner*, but is viewed from inside the ship instead of from behind it. An elaborate instrumentation panel depicts a radar screen with enemy locations, the amount of time prior to running out of fuel, and more. *G-LOC* fans may enjoy *Air Diver* to some degree.

Al Michaels Announces Hardball III

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: MindSpan.
Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The Genesis sequel to *Hardball!* (*Hardball II* was only released for computers), *Hardball III* features Emmy award-winning sportscaster Al Michaels calling the play-by-play action. Once again, the game lacks MLB and MLBPA licensing, but player and team editors let gamers customize player names, abilities, and pictures, along with team logos. There are 26 realistic ballparks, plus a Home Run Derby, a manage-only mode, and batting cage practice. Types of swings include bunt, contact, power, and strategy, each selectable via a menu. A similar menu system lets pitchers select from four types of throws. Battery backup saves edited information, season progress, team and player stats, two created teams, and VCR-like instant replays. Viewpoints include behind the batter, behind the pitcher, or alternating, and players can employ such strategies as intentional walks, shifting the infield, and adjusting the outfield. The SNES version of the game, which lacks involvement from Al Michaels, is simply called *Hardball III*. Followed by: *Hardball '94*.

Aladdin

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Virgin Games/Disney Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

One of the best movie-based games of the era, *Aladdin* is based on Disney's 1992 feature film. Players guide the boy thief Aladdin as he runs, jumps, climbs, bounces, ducks, rides a magic carpet and rope, hand-walks across beams, and dodges obstacles (including hot coals, spikes, lava, and wrecker balls) through 10 beautiful, cartoon-like levels: Agrabah Street, The Desert, Agrabah Rooftops, Sultan's Dungeon (which is when the game becomes challenging), Cave of Wonders, The Escape, Rug Ride, Inside the Lamp, Sultan's Palace, and Jafar's Palace. Aladdin slashes enemies (merchants, guards, skeletons, and the like) with his scimitar and jumps on them for close combat, but he can also collect and throw apples. Other items to grab include tokens (for entering bonus rounds), gems (for extra tries and con-

tinues), scarab halves (for entrance to the Cave of Wonders), and more. In addition to rock solid platforming action, *Aladdin* boasts wonderful animation (check out the cartoonlike antics of enemies being reduced to boxers and camels being jumped on to spit at enemies) and terrific original music by Tommy Tallarico. Disney fans will appreciate the instrumental versions of the film's famous songs, including: "A Whole New World," "Prince Ali," and "Friend Like Me." Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, and Game Gear.

Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle

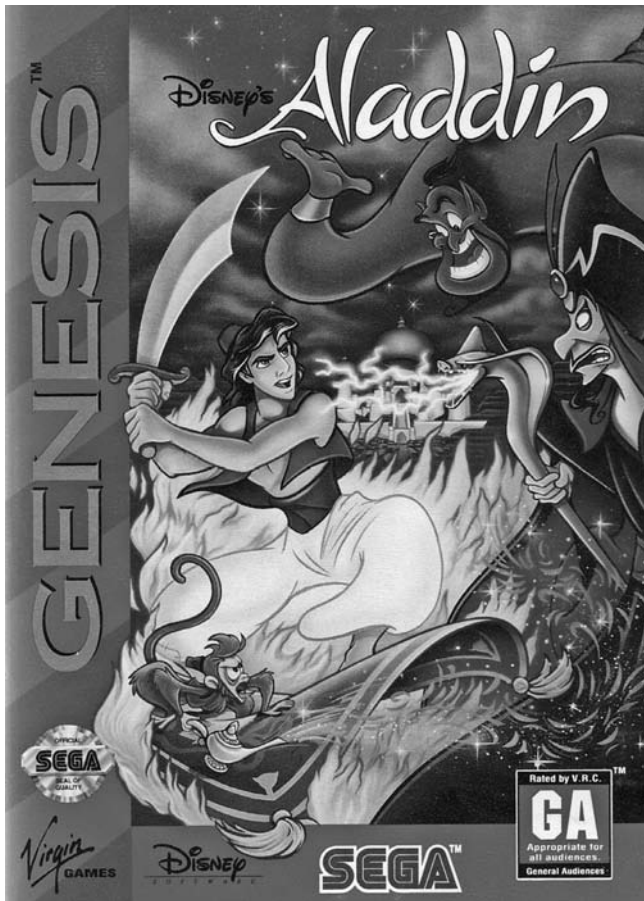
Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1989.

Alex Kidd, the Master System mascot, makes his one and only 16-bit leap to the Sega Genesis. On a mission to rescue King Thor (his father), Alex must run, jump, swim, and crawl through 11 colorful levels, punching and kicking monkeys, condors, sunfish, and other creatures. To help him on his way, Alex can purchase a pedicopter, a motorcycle, a pogo stick, a power bracelet, a wizard's cane, and a cape. As in *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*, boss battles are games of Janken (rock/paper/scissors). Fans of the Alex Kidd Master System series (which began in 1986 with *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*) should enjoy *Enchanted Castle*. Also released in the arcades.

Alien Storm

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat/First-Person Shooter/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Alien Storm lets one or two players select from three different characters: bazooka-toting Gordon, flame-throwing Karla, and whip-wielding Slammer (a robot). Each character controls roughly the same, with players



Based on the 1992 feature film, *Aladdin* is one of many quality Disney-based platformers.

using a variety of attacks (running, jumping, combo, special) to battle strange looking aliens. At the end of each level, the action switches to pseudo-3D target shooting, where gamers guide a crosshair through a building, firing away at aliens and other items. The original arcade version (Sega, 1990) offered a three-player simultaneous option while this port features an exclusive Duel fighting mode.

Alien 3

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

Vastly superior to David Fincher's 1992 movie, *Alien 3* for the Genesis puts players in the role of female action hero Ripley (played by Sigourney Weaver in the film), who explores maze-like airshafts and dreary cell blocks, rescuing prisoners from the titular creatures (which splatter when destroyed). Ripley is armed with a gun, a flamethrower, and a grenade launcher, making for tons of fun monster-killing action. The game is more arcade-like than its SNES counterpart, which requires players to fulfill such missions as repair computers and weld doors shut. Also released for the Game Gear and NES. Much different than the top-down Game Boy version.

Alisia Dragoon

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Game Arts. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

In *Alisia Dragoon*, players control a sexy barbarian as she battles her way through eight medieval levels filled with poisonous centipedes, winged gargoyles, crazed ninjas, and other enemies. She's equipped with multi-directional, auto-targeting laser fire, but can also call on four different upgradable companions: Dragon Frye, who uses fireballs; Thunder Raven, who unleashes a thunder flash; Ball O' Fire, who attacks by touching foes; and Boomerang Lizard, who throws boomerangs. Bolstered by a fine musical score, *Alisia Dragoon* offers sufficient challenges and enough graphical detail to please the hardest of Genesis owners.

Altered Beast

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

A faithfully adapted port of Sega's 1988 arcade game (the coin-op classic boasts richer coloring, but the gameplay and five levels are essentially the same), *Altered Beast* was the original pack-in game with the Genesis console. The standard walk, jump, punch, and kick action is augmented by digitized voice effects and the player's ability to morph into five different beasts: werewolf, weredragon, wearbear, weretiger, and Golden Werewolf. The action is slow, but it's fun (if frustrating at times) beating up on the various zombies, wolves, leaches, demons, and other creatures. Also released for the Master System. Followed by: *Altered Beast: Guardian of the Realms* (GBA).

American Gladiators

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Imagitec Design. Sports/Extreme, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Inspired by the television series (1989–1996), *American Gladiators* for the Genesis lets players compete in six events: Assault (fire tennis balls at targets); Joust (battle with padded sticks); The Wall (climb); Atlasphere (roll a sphere over pods); Powerball (race to put ball in guarded bins); and The Eliminator (featuring treadmill, handbike, balance beam, cargo net, zip wire, hurdles, sprint, and wrestling past Gladiators). "Real" Gladiators Gemini, Nitro, Turbo, Thunder, Laser, Ice, Blaze, Lace, Gold, and Zap are featured. Also released for the NES (sans Atlasphere) and the Super NES, both versions of which feature an event not found in the Genesis rendition: Human Cannonball, in which players swing on a rope, retract their legs, and form a human cannonball to knock a Gladiator off a pedestal.

Andre Agassi Tennis

Publisher: TecMagik. Developer: TecMagik. Sports/Tennis, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Thanks to choppy graphics and poor controls (which exhibit a delayed reaction), *Andre*

Agassi Tennis is a cumbersome, almost unplayable mess, especially in terms of timing and aiming shots, putting spin on the ball, and precise player movement. Gamers can play as Agassi himself or as one of seven fictional players (each accorded different attributes) on four court types: grass, clay, hard, or American indoor. Standard tennis moves are available (lobs, slices, backhands, forehands, serves, lunges, and the like), as are singles, doubles, and three modes of play: Practice (against a ball machine), Tournament, and Skins Tournament, the latter of which grants gamers money for successful shots. Sound effects are minimal (ball hitting the racket and court), but an announcer is on hand to call out scores. Also released for the Game Gear and SNES.

Animaniacs

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Looking to stock their new “hip pop” culture store, Yakoo, Wakko, and Dot explore various Warner Bros. movie sets, including Bungle in the Jungle, Space Wars, and Remember the à la Mode, each of which has an item to find, such as a badge, hat, or helmet. Instead of guiding a single character, players can switch between each of the three characters at any time. The two characters not being directly controlled will tag along. To battle enemies and make it past various obstacles and puzzles (such as reaching a high platform or igniting a fuse to light a bomb), players must utilize Yakko’s ability to move objects and use a paddle ball, Wakko’s mad mallet skills, and Dot’s ability to blow kisses to distract or manipulate enemies. Obstacles include catapults, giant boulders, smart bombs, runaway trains, and more. *Animaniacs*, which is based on the Steven Spielberg-produced cartoon, is short and easy to beat, making it kid-friendly. However, cartoon-like graphics and good music make it a game anyone can enjoy. Includes appearances by The Nurse, Rita, Runt, Mindy, Buttons, and Ralph the security guard. Also released for the Game Boy. The SNES version also takes place on faux Warner movie sets, but it’s a much different game.

The Aquatic Games Starring James Pond and the Aquabats

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Millennium Interactive. Sports/Olympics, 1–4 players (alternating). 1992.

The third and final *James Pond* cart for the Genesis, *Aquatic Games* offers eight Olympic-style (and animal-style) events: 100-Meter Splash (button-mash to race across wide body of water); Kipper Watching (run, jump, deflect beach balls away from other seals); Bouncy Castle (jump and do tricks on sponge trampoline); Feeding Time (use sweets to divert fish from fishermen — plays a little like the arcade classic *Tapper*); Shell Shooting (jump on shell creatures to catch them and then throw them at balloons); Tour de Grass (ride a unicycle as a circus-shark); Hop, Skip, and Jump (run to mark and then jump); and Leap Frog (run hurdles as a frog). Plus, there are a couple of bonus rounds (one featuring an expert juggler named P.J. Penguin) playable by those who score enough points in the standard events. Cute, cartoonish graphics and nice animation complement this odd assortment of mostly playable games. Released for the SNES as *The Super Aquatic Games Starring the Aquabats*.

Arcade Classics

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Al Baker & Associates. Non-Scrolling Shooter/Ball-and-Paddle, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1996.

Arcade Classics collects three legendary Atari arcade games in one cartridge: *Centipede* (guide a wand around the lower portion of a field of mushrooms, firing upward at bugs); *Missile Command* (guide a targeting cursor to stop falling missiles from destroying cities); and *Pong* (“avoid missing ball for high score”). Both *Centipede* and *Missile Command* have terribly sluggish controls (the lack of a trackball can’t excuse just how bad these games handle), making them all but unplayable. Both games include a standard port, along with a Sega version with ostensibly better graphics. Unfortunately, the arcade originals have sharper visuals, and the Sega version of *Centipede* is muddled up with a grass playfield that does nothing

but obscure the action. *Pong*, which also includes *Hockey*, is the best game in the collection, even though the paddles don't move as fast as their arcade counterparts. Those wanting to play retro coin-op titles on the Genesis should stick with *Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits*. Also released for the Game Gear.

Arch Rivals: The Arcade Game

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Arc Developments. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The in-game sideline cheerleaders are missing, and the voice effects and coloring aren't quite up to par, but *Arch Rivals: The Arcade Game* for the Genesis is nevertheless a solid rendition of Bally/Midway's 1989 arcade game (which was simply called *Arch Rivals*). The game is a precursor to the over-the-top, two-on-two action popularized by the *NBA Jam* series. Players perform such b-ball standards as dribbling, shooting three-pointers, passing, rebounding, dunking, and playing defense, but punching is emphasized as a key strategy in winning the game. Players can also pull down one another's shorts, which is actually quite funny. The referee is largely for show (there are no fouls), and players sometimes slip on trash thrown onto the floor by fans. There are eight different characters (one of whom you'll control), each with a distinctive personality and skill set. The elevated view is from the side, and the screen scrolls horizontally to show the entire court. Also released for the Game Gear. Released for the NES (sans voice effects) as *Arch Rivals: A Basketbrawl!*

Arcus Odyssey

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Maze Shooter/Adventure, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Viewed from a $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective, *Arcus Odyssey* lets one or two players select from four different characters: sword-swinging Jedda, whip-wielding Erin, arrow-shooting Diana, and fireball-firing Bead, each of whom can cast various spells, such as guided shots, energy blasts, or shockwaves (power crystals found in chests provide magic upgrades). Players guide their

hero through tombs, castles, a pyramid, and other labyrinthine areas, battling giant frogs, lizard men, minotaurs, and other creatures. *Arcus Odyssey* is similar to *Gauntlet*, but has a more elaborate and varied fighting system.

Ariel: Disney's The Little Mermaid

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Loosely based on the classic Disney film, *The Little Mermaid* (1989), this cute, colorful game plays like a poor kid's *Ecco the Dolphin*. Gamers guide Ariel (armed with her voice) or King Triton (armed with fireballs) underwater, searching for sickly little polyps in order to change them back into merpeople. A map helps players find the polyps, and friends Flounder (moves boulders), Sebastian (kills all nearby enemies), and digger fish (uncovers buried treasures) are on hand to offer additional support. Also, players can purchase keys, health hearts, a more powerful voice attack (Ariel), thunderbolts (Triton), and other items in Scuttle's shop. While searching the seas, players must battle such enemies as clams, crabs, sea urchins, eels, and skeletons. There are four short stages (The Reef, Sunken Ships, Atlantis, and the Cave) and four evil bosses: Lava Monster, Shark Boss, Medusa, and, yes, Ursula herself. Thanks to dicey controls, maneuvering through tight spaces can be tricky. Fortunately, the game offers three difficulty levels, the easiest of which is indeed very easy. Also released for the Game Gear.

Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Golf, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1989.

Although Arnold Palmer himself is not a playable golfer, *Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf* is a solid game that fans of the sport will enjoy. Three modes of play are available: Practice, Match, and Tournament, the latter of which consists of 12 rounds against 15 golfers. Winning a round gives players a new set of clubs, improved skill and shot power, and better caddy advice. Gameplay involves selecting a club, setting the golfer's stance, and using a power gauge to adjust the strength and height

of the shot. Sand traps, water, wind, and roughs come into play, and gamers can golf on courses in the U.S., Great Britain, and Japan.

Arrow Flash

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Side-scrolling shooters of the 16-bit era are known for being difficult, but *Arrow Flash* is actually pretty easy, thanks to pushover bosses and the titular weapon, which is readily available and allows the player's ship to become invulnerable and plow through anything in its path. Otherwise, the weaponry is fairly ordinary, even though the ship can turn into a robot. There are only three different standard weapons to grab, but players can upgrade the power of shots and acquire speed power-ups, shields, and homing missiles. Hardcore shooter fans should stick with *Gaiases* and *Thunder Force III*, but *Arrow Flash* is certainly playable (not to mention fast paced).

Art Alive

Publisher: Sega. Developer: FarSight Studios. Art, 1 player. 1991.

Sega's answer to *Mario Paint* for the Super NES, *Art Alive* lets the user draw, paint, animate, and create pictures on his or her television screen via the Genesis console. Unfortunately, unlike *Mario Paint*, there is no save feature or mouse control (the d-pad is a less-than-ideal drawing implement). What the game (actually, it's an art program, not a game) does offer are a variety of art kit features, including: three different pencil tips (and other such tools, including erase and fill); spray cans for shading patterns; circles, rectangles, and squares in three different outline widths; eight different 16-color palettes (meaning only 16 colors are available onscreen at once); and more than 50 supplied graphics and animations, including Sonic the Hedgehog and ToeJam and Earl. Animations are limited to four frames, but younger boys and girls will have a fairly good time creating their own works of art. As with *Color a Dinosaur* for the NES, the manual recommends that kids record their creations on video tape.

Art of Fighting

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Like its arcade/Neo Geo (1992) and SNES (1993) counterparts, *Art of Fighting* for the Genesis has large characters, detailed graphics (though some concessions have been made), bonus rounds (bottle cut and ice pillar smash), taunting (or "razzing"), a spirit gauge, a strength gauge, and a story mode. However, the controls and sounds have taken a downturn, and the trademark scaling effects (where the camera zooms in and out on the action) have been removed. Two difficulty levels are available (as opposed to eight in the SNES version). Six-button controller recommended. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

Asterix and the Great Rescue

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the French comic book series, *Asterix the Gaul*, *Asterix and the Great Rescue* finds Asterix and his chubby chum Obelix working their way through six timed, multi-stage levels (The Gaulish Village, Roman Encampment, The Forest, Germany, A Roman Galley, and Rome), trying to rescue their compatriots Getafix and Dogmatix. Prior to a level beginning, players select control of Asterix or Obelix, both of whom can run, jump, crouch, crawl, and punch. By drinking potions, they arm themselves with fireballs (for overcoming enemies from a distance and blasting walls), clouds (for creating platforms), a disguise (for sneaking past enemy Romans), and levitation (for floating through the air). Other items provide points, health, invulnerability, faster running, harder punching, and extra lives. The game, though playable, is neither as funny nor as enjoyable as the comic book. Also released for the Game Gear.

Atomic Robo-Kid

Publisher: Treco. Developer: Micronics. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Thanks to ugly box art (the titular robot is a squatty cylinder with a long nose) and

uninspired gameplay, *Atomic Robo-Kid* proves that, at least in this case, you can indeed judge a game by its cover. Large, nicely detailed bosses provide the game with some redeeming value, but Robo-Kid is as slow as he is unattractive. Armed with nuclear weaponry (including three-way fire, missiles, and spread shot) for battling the various mutants, gun turrets, “governors” (i.e. bosses), and other obstacles, Robo-Kid shoots his way through 19 short levels of play. Unlike in most games of this type, players can backtrack, but regenerating enemies make this a less-than-desirable strategy. Based on the 1989 UPL arcade game, which offered a two-player alternating mode.

Atomic Runner

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East.
Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

In *Atomic Runner*, the screen automatically scrolls, with the player, cast in the role of a young scientist donning a power suit, running automatically to the right. The player has full control over jumping (on platforms and over chasms), shooting (such weapons as pulse lasers and rapid-fire boomerangs), and facing left and right (but not moving back to the left). The objective is to save Earth from the evil Deathtarians and their cybernetic robot slaves, who attack from all directions and dish out one-hit deaths. There are seven large levels, each containing mini-bosses and an end-of-level boss. To destroy a boss, players should find and exploit its weak point. Level design is interesting, featuring everything from industrial/futuristic platforms to Egyptian backgrounds. Complemented by a rousing musical score, *Atomic Runner* is fast paced, finely programmed, and very challenging, making it a good title for hardcore shooter junkies. Fans of the 1988 Data East arcade game, which was called *Chelnov: Atomic Runner*, will surely enjoy it.

ATP Tour Championship Tennis

Publisher: Sega. Developer: SIMS. Sports/Tennis, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A sequel of sorts to *Wimbledon Championship Tennis*, *ATP Tour Championship Tennis*

lets gamers build a player from scratch, toggling such attributes as name, birth date, birthplace, height, weight, handedness, footwork, and control over forehand, backhand, and serve. By winning matches, gamers can further develop their created player. In addition, there are 40 tennis pros from which to choose, including such legends as Arthur Ashe, John McEnroe, Pete Sampras, and Rod Laver. Other features and options in this fun, action-packed tennis sim include replays, digitized player photos, digitized voice effects (including McEnroe-style complaints), varying game speeds, four court types (carpet, hard, grass, and clay), a shadowed ball with scaling effects, and four modes of play: Exhibition Match, Exhibition Tournament, ATP Senior Tour Event, and the ATP Tour. The elevated view is from behind one end of the court.

Awesome Possum Kicks Dr. Machino's Butt!

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

One of many mascot-based games inspired by (but inferior to) *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Awesome Possum* has players saving the rainforest, the ocean, and other areas from Dr. Machino and his environment-destroying robots. The redundant, faux-cool action consists of running to the end of each level, jumping on enemies and over obstacles along the way. There are recyclables to gather and environmental trivia questions to answer, and Possum can hitch rides on a rhino, a giant bee, and a goose. Unfortunately, poor collision detection (among other flaws) ruins the potential fun. Originally packaged with a 12-page, full-color comic book.

AWS Pro Moves Soccer

Publisher: Asciiware. Developer: Zyrinx. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Sporting an overhead view of a large vertical field, *AWS Pro Moves Soccer* features Training (practice without an opposing team on the field), Exhibition, World Cup tournament (32 teams compete for the title), and 8 Nations tournament (similar to World Cup,

but much shorter). Gamers can play as one of 32 different international teams or create their own team according to uniform design. Other options and features include: adjustable game lengths; adjustable wind strength; different field conditions (dry, wet, or snowy); field medics; voice effects; and fouls turned on or off. Moves include kickoffs, penalty kicks, sliding tackles, headers, rainbow kicks, speed bursts, and more. AWS stands for Asciiware World Sports. A solid, fast-paced title, but pales in comparison to the mighty FIFA soccer series.

Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 player. 1992.

A sensational sequel to *Super Monaco GP*, *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP II* features the same type of viewpoint: from the driver's seat, with a rearview mirror positioned along the top of the screen. Three modes of play are available: Free Practice, Senna GP, and World Championship. Depending on the mode selected, players will race against 15 computer-controlled drivers, enter a 16-race season, select transmission type (automatic, four-speed manual, or seven-speed manual), race a qualifying lap to determine starting position, and/or respond to challenges from rival drivers and answer invitations to join racing teams. Brazilian Formula One champion Ayrton Senna, who helped design the game, appears between races to offer advice.

Back to the Future Part III

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Multi-Genre Action, 1 player. 1991.

Loosely based on the 1990 feature film, *Back to the Future Part III* sends Doc Brown and Marty McFly back in time to the Old West (circa 1885). The game is divided into four equally bad sections: Buckboard Chase, in which Doc hops on a horse, ducking, jumping, and shooting (featuring side-scrolling and top-down action); Shooting Gallery, with Marty guiding a gun around the screen, firing at ducks, geese, and Buford "Mad Dog" Tannen and his gang; Pie Throwing, in which Marty

lobs pies at bad guys (viewed from an isometric perspective); and The Train, in which Marty punches, crawls, jumps, ducks, and collects speed logs while atop a moving train. Much different than the NES *Back to the Future* games.

Ballz

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: PF Magic. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A 3D button-masher with a well-rounded approach (so to speak), *Ballz* features eight playable fighters—Boomer, Bruiser, Crusher, Divine, Kronk, Tsunami, Turbo, and Yoko—each comprised of colored spheres (or "balls" if you will). Each character is rated according to 12 different attributes (speed, charge attacks, punch damage, and the like), and each can pull off a variety of punches, kicks, and special moves, including slide tackles, ball throws, cartwheels, groin kicks, spring attacks, club attacks, and more. Characters can even morph into other characters. The game offers 15 futuristic fighting arenas, each with a background scoreboard depicting semi-humorous commentary and insults. The characters themselves are humor-based as well, ranging from a rhinoceros to a ballerina to a farting gorilla. Quirky sound effects add to the strangeness of the game. Also released for the SNES (sans the "You gotta have Ballz" intro text). Followed by: *Ballz: The Director's Cut* (3DO).

Barbie Super Model

Publisher: Hi Tech Expressions. Developer: Tahoe Software. Multi-Genre Game, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

In *Barbie Super Model*, players guide the famous doll through four brief levels, each of which features a different mode of transportation: walking, driving, skating, or cycling. The action moves at a slow pace, Barbie's abilities are few (she can't jump or use weapons), and the various obstacles (beach balls, pedestrians, ice, and the like) are easy to dodge. Barbie can pick up items for bonus points and participate in a couple of different memory-based mini-games in which players must memorize vari-

ous moves for a fashion show or match Barbie's outfit and accessories to those of a fashion magazine. Also released for the SNES.

Barkley: Shut Up and Jam!

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade.
Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous).
1994.

Featuring digitized voice effects (which are pretty scratchy) by The Round Mound of Rebound himself, *Barkley: Shut Up and Jam!* isn't as good as *NBA Jam*, but it offers the same type of arcade-style, two-on-two action, including high flying monster dunks and reverse 360 jams. There are no refs, so players can get away with pushing and shoving, and games take place on seven different street ball courts in seven different cities. Gamers can play as Barkley or as one of 15 street all-stars, each rated according to twos, threes, dunks, rebounding, steals, and speed. A Tournament Mode is available, as is the ability to play for a certain point total or against the clock. Also released for the SNES.

Barkley: Shut Up and Jam! 2

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade.
Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous).
1995.

Sir Charles gets a sequel with *Barkley: Shut Up and Jam! 2*, a Genesis exclusive. Once again, there are no refs (goal-tending is verboten, though), meaning players can push and shove. There are eight different street ball courts, each surrounded by such urban elements as graffiti, a moving train, and, oddly enough, a sea of green ooze (or so it appears). As in the original game, Exhibition and Tournament modes are available, and the two-on-two, *NBA Jam*-style action can be played for a specific point total or against the clock. One upgrade is in player animation, with more than 2,000 animations depicting such moves as alley-oops, behind-the-back passes, and 25 different slam dunks (many of which feature physics-defying, above-the-rim jumps). Boasting an NBA career that lasted from 1984 to 2000, power forward Charles Barkley played for the 76ers, Rockets, and Suns.

Barney's Hide & Seek Game

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Realtime Associates. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

This "super-dee-duper" game lets players control the titular purple dinosaur as he makes his way through four prize-filled levels (Forest Friends, Music Town, Deep Blue Sea, and Farm Fun), hugging, blowing kisses to, and sharing kind words with friends he finds. Jumping is automatic, and the game is slow and easy to complete, making for a great entry title for preschoolers. Colorful, cartoon-like graphics and a stunning amount of dialogue (more than 100 words in all) add to the fun. There's even educational value as Barney helps kids count, match, cross streets safely, and take out trash. Inspired by the *Barney & Friends* television series, which began in 1992.

BASS Masters Classic

Publisher: Black Pearl Software. Developer: Black Pearl Software. Sports/Fishing, 1 player. 1995.

Endorsed by the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.), *BASS Masters Classic* lets armchair anglers fish in four different lakes: Skull, Monkey, Deborah, and Mosquito. Tournaments consist of three days of fishing, and the goal is to catch large bass while avoiding carp and trout. After a day at the lake, the five largest bass the player caught are weighed and compared to the other fisherman's catches. While players pilot the boat around the lake, the action is viewed from overhead. After the line has been cast, the view switches to the side, with the gamer trying to lure fish with bait. Players are given a variety of options in the following categories: rod, reel, fish finder, boat engine, and bait (propeller, grub, popper, crank, worm, and spinner). Temperature, time of day, water clarity, and other factors can affect the ability for players to fish well. The game features nine different characters, including Bonnie B. Wild and Sammy "Sonar" Simpson. Also released for the SNES and Game Boy Color.

BASS Masters Classic: Pro Edition

Publisher: Black Pearl Software. Developer:

Black Pearl Software. Sports/Fishing, 1 player. 1996.

The follow-up to *BASS Masters Classic*, *BASS Masters Classic: Pro Edition* plays a lot like its progenitor, but does include some new features, including the ability to play as six different pro bass anglers: George Cochran, Shaw Grigsby Jr., Gary Klein, Tom Mann Jr., Dee Thomas, and Kevin VanDam. There are five different lakes this time around (as opposed to four), and they are larger in size. Other enhancements include: smarter computer A.I., better graphics, new music, more fishing equipment, difficulty level selection, and a zoom function. Endorsed by the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.). Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *BASS Masters 2000* (N64).

Batman Forever

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Probe Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

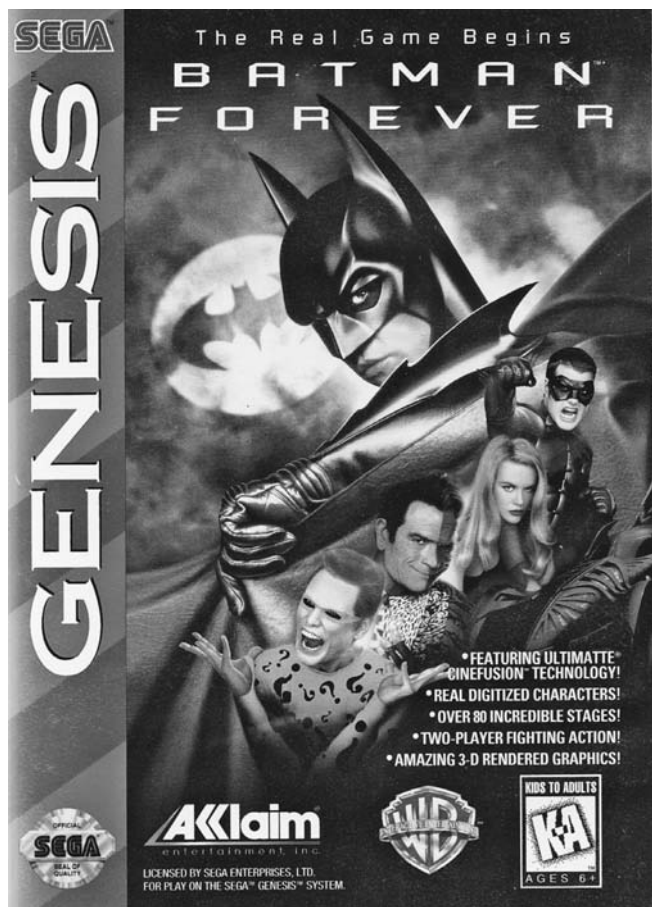
Based on Joel Schumacher's critically panned film (1995), *Batman Forever* lets players guide Batman or Robin (or both in two-player mode) through eight levels, including Arkham Asylum and Wayne Manor. The Caped Crusaders are loaded down with gadgets, such as Batarangs, smoke pellets, grappling hooks, and tranquilizer darts, plus a variety of punches and kicks. The Riddler leaves clues while Two-Face coins provide energy and extra lives. The game's digitized graphics evoke *Mortal Kombat*. Thanks to better controls and a lack of load screens, the Genesis version of *Batman Forever* is superior to its SNES counterpart.

Batman Returns

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Malibu Interactive. Side-Scrolling

Combat/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Based on Tim Burton's 1992 feature film, *Batman Returns* for the Genesis begins about halfway through the movie, when Batman was framed for Penguin's crime of pushing the Ice Princess off a building. Unlike Konami's more combat-heavy SNES version of the game, this one is sluggish and is hindered by an awkward grappling technique that Batman must use to reach certain platforms. Other gadgets the jumping, kicking, and punching Caped Crusader can wield include smoke bombs, Bat Swarms, standard Batarangs, and Super Seeking Batarangs, all of which are used in dispatching the various thugs, knife throwers, clowns, and other enemies (including Penguin and



Play as the Caped Crusader or the Boy Wonder in *Batman Forever*, which is based on Joel Schumacher's 1995 feature film.

Catwoman) that populate the game's seven levels of play. The Sega CD version features driving levels and a superior soundtrack.

Batman: Revenge of the Joker

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Ringler Studios. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Batman: Revenge of the Joker is similar to *Batman: Return of the Joker* for the NES, but, surprisingly enough, the NES version looks and plays better. Players control a pudgy, Adam West-type Batman as he jumps on platforms, dodges spikes and lasers (among other obstacles), and uses a constant supply of upgradeable Batarangs to battle bad guys. Other weapons include sonic neutralizers, shield stars, and a crossbow. Batman can also kick enemies, but, oddly enough, he cannot punch. The action, which has a brighter, more colorful look than certain other Batman titles (such as the darkly awesome *Batman* for the NES based on the Tim Burton movie), transpires through seven levels, including: an old cathedral, The Joker's warehouse, a snowy landscape, on top of a moving train, an ammunition base, and a jungle island. Musical score by the prolific and popular Tommy Tallarico.

Batman: The Video Game

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Sunsoft. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

In *Batman: The Video Game*, players guide the Caped Crusader as he walks along punching and kicking bad guys and jumping on platforms. There are platforms that move, have spikes, and disappear, and certain platform jumps must be executed perfectly. Enemies to battle include thugs, sliders, hitmen, and bazooka men, along with such bosses as Jack Napier, Bob the Goon, and the Joker himself. In addition to punching and kicking, Batman can throw Batarangs and use a grappling hook to reach elevated areas. There are also fast, fun, furious side-scrolling shooter areas in which Batman blows away such enemies as the Jokermobile, the Joker Van, and the Joker Copter. The game is tough, but enjoyable, and most players will probably burn through all five continues. Six stages are featured: Gotham City

Streets, Axis Chemical Factory, Flugelheim Museum, Nuclear Power Blaster (drive the Batmobile), In the Sky Over Gotham City (pilot the Batwing), and Gotham Cathedral. *Batman: The Video Game* lacks the Danny Elfman score of Tim Burton's *Batman* movie (1989) on which it is based, but the music nevertheless sounds great, and the game does a nice job evoking the look of the feature film. Much different than the also stellar NES and Game Boy versions.

Battle Squadron

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Innerprise Software. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

The year is 2400, and your mission is to rescue hostages on the planet Urania, the home planet of the Barrax Empire. What this amounts to is an extremely difficult shooter, even though players have the option to slow enemy bullets and decrease the maximum amount of bullets appearing onscreen at any given time. Players guide their Delta II Strike Cruiser over and under varied alien landscapes (which obscure the action at times), shooting such enemies as F-319 Bombers, Terranian Terror Tanks, Karnus Fighters, Biotech Wingmen, Double NitroGunners, and Mutant CyberSnakes. Weapon upgrades include particle beam, energy ball, magma wave, and laser power-ups. Players are also given a limited number of smart bombs. The Delta II is quick, but certain enemies are even quicker. Two-player simultaneous mode recommended. Based on the 1989 Amiga computer game, which has better graphics and sounds.

Battlemaster

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Nick Pelling. Action Strategy, 1 player. 1991.

Battlemaster is an unusual action strategy game with RPG elements thrown in for good measure. Viewed from overhead, the game has players maneuvering a group through a medieval fantasy world, trying to clear each level by killing 75 percent of the humanoids and monsters contained therein. There are two types of squad-based combat: projectile missile and battle melee, the latter demanding danger-

ously close contact. In addition to using such weapons as bows, wands, swords, scimitars, and battleaxes, players will manage their troops, search for gold and food, don armor, use keys to open doors, avoid spikes and pits, flip switches, climb castle walls, solve puzzles, use healing potions, and much more. Prior to starting the game, players determine the race of their party: Human, Orc, Dwarf, or Elf, each with varying strengths and weaknesses. More importantly, players must select the class of their party: thief, warrior, wizard, or merchant, each with different attributes. Areas to build upon include health, morale, and skill. Certain members of the group tend to wander off, so corralling them as you go is important. Based on the 1990 computer game, *Battlemaster* is a long, difficult adventure.

BattleTech: A Game of Armored

Combat

Publisher: Extreme Entertainment Group.
Developer: Malibu Games. Action Strategy/
Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 or 2
players (simultaneous). 1994.

Viewed from an isometric perspective, *BattleTech: A Game of Armored Combat* for the Genesis is based on — but not as complex as — the popular *BattleTech* role-playing game by FASA. Players control a massive BattleMech as it walks fairly quickly (for a battlemech) around five huge, nicely detailed planets (including snowy plains, deserts, and jungles), laying waste to tanks, gun turrets, defensive mechs, helicopters, armored infantry, and more. Prior to entering battle, players strategically select three weapons (including lasers, cannons, and missiles) out of an armament of nine. In two-player mode, one gamer guides the mech while the other handles weaponry. Ideal for *Desert Strike* and *MechWarrior* fans.

Battletoads

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Rare. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

This port of the original NES *Battletoads* offers better graphics and sounds and a somewhat decreased level of difficulty (a good thing,

since the NES version was notoriously hard), but otherwise delivers a similar experience (another good thing). Players control a humanoid amphibian as it punches, slams, kicks, climbs, jumps, rappels, and cruises (on three different vehicles) its way through a variety of creature-filled levels, with terrain ranging from mountains to rivers to tunnels to arctic caverns and beyond. As in the NES game, the two-player mode is more challenging than the solo game since both players have to get past the obstacles. One of the more entertaining side-scrolling combat games for the system. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear.

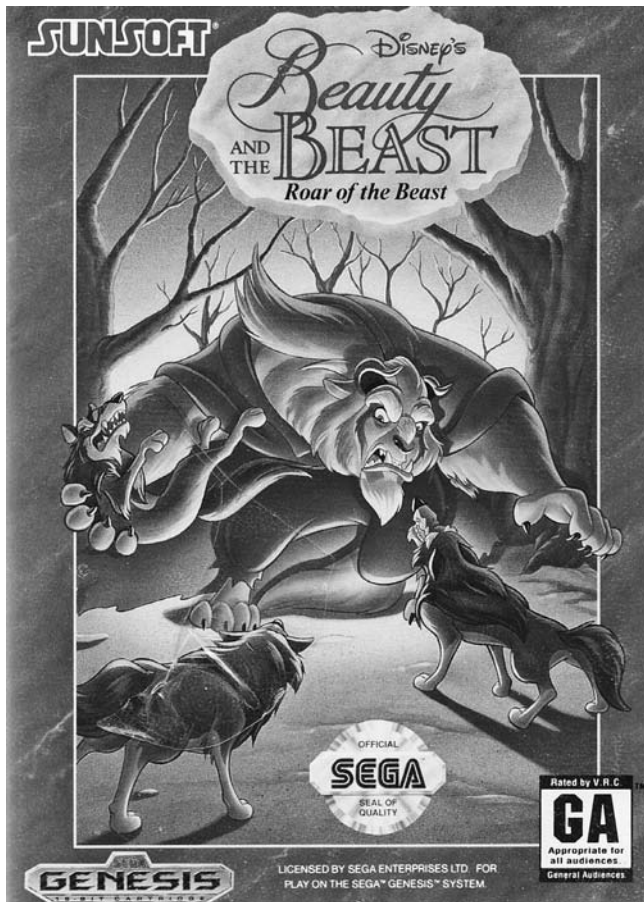
Battletoads/Double Dragon: The Ultimate Team

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Rare. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A worthy sequel to *Battletoads*, *Battletoads/Double Dragon* is a dream team matchup of Zits, Rash, and Pimple (the Battletoads) with twins Billy and Jimmy Lee (of the Double Dragons). The gameplay and humor evoke *Battletoads* (as opposed to *Double Dragon*), with our heroes battling the combined armies of the Dark Queen and the Shadow Boss across the top of the massive Colossus space ship, in the bowels of said ship, and atop a missile headed straight for Earth. The Toads unleash big punches and kicks, headbutts, and slams while the Dragons use various martial arts techniques. Both will jump, use weaponry, drive a speeder bike and a space pod, swing across chasms via a turbo rope, and avoid such obstacles as mines, sparkbolts, electrobarriers, machine guns, and astro boulders. The Genesis version is similar to the SNES rendition, but has more musical tracks and more humor. The SNES game has better graphics overall and richer sound. Both are spruced up ports of the NES version, with a few tweaks here and there in terms of level design. The Game Boy rendition is for one player only.

Beast Wrestler

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Riot. Sports/Wrestling, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.



Players control Beast in this surprisingly hard take on Disney's 1991 classic, *Beauty and the Beast*.

Beast Wrestler is an ambitious, but slow and boring game. After selecting one of 10 different monsters (sporting horns, wings, claws, fangs, and/or other such accoutrements), players step into an isometric ring and go at it against another creature. Match Mode is a simple fight while Tournament Mode lets players train to upgrade their character, purchase items (speed, endurance, power, and the like), and battle it out for the World Championship. Moves include dash, punch, drop kick, lariat, tail hold, body slam, bite, hammer throw, tail press, three bar hold, make the opponent stand up, and back drop. Each wrestler also has a special deathblow move, such as power bomb, waver sword, or snake tail. As a bonus, players can work with a Life Science team to create their very own amalgamated creature.

Beauty and the Beast: Belle's Quest

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Play the bookish, yet beautiful heroine of Disney's glorious feature film, *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture. Belle's titular quest takes her through four levels: Village, Forest Maze, West Wing, and Return to the Castle. Belle has no weaponry, making for a fairly dull adventure, but each level does contain a mini-game in which she arranges books, avoids flying utensils, or dances with Beast (or the Prince) while collecting falling petals. Other activities including speaking with villagers, ducking into doors (to avoid Gaston), exploring a maze-like forest, and riding Philippe, who jumps over cliffs, bridges, and rivers.

Beauty and the Beast: Roar of the Beast

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

This "tale as old as time" has players guiding the Beast from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), with the story being told from Beast's perspective. Beast, who can walk, jump, duck, and crawl, attacks snakes, bats, rats, and other enemies three different ways: pounce, standing claw swipe, and crouching claw swap (Beast moves faster when on all fours). To make it past even the first level, players must use these attacks quickly and with efficient timing as this is a tough, uncompromising game. Beast can also roar to freeze enemies, but this highly effective move is limited in number. There are four gorgeously illustrated levels of play: The Castle (protect the rose from a charging boar); The Snowy Forest (defeat wolf to rescue Belle); The Villagers Attack (get enchanted

servants to help defeat villagers); and The Rooftop (dodge arrows and torches, battle Gaston). There are also bonus rounds involving putting together a stained glass window puzzle, catching falling rose petals, and searching the castle to find items. This is a fun (if short) game, but an easier difficulty option for youngsters would've been nice.

Beavis and Butt-head

Publisher: Viacom New Media. Developer: Radical Entertainment. Third-Person Adventure, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

While the MTV animated series *Beavis and Butt-head* was controversial when it aired during the 1990s, it seems pretty tame today, as does this video game. Players guide either Beavis, who uses a burping attack, or Butt-head, who farts on enemies, through seven levels: Burger World, Drive-In, Highland H.S., Hospital, Street, Turbo Mall 2000, and G.W.A.R. Both characters must jump over obstacles, some of which move quickly. The objective is to find pieces of scattered G.W.A.R. tickets so the boys can go to the concert. Beavis and Butt-head must work together to find useful items to sell for cash, gain access to certain areas, and solve tricky puzzles, such as cooking a dead rat to serve a customer so he will barf out a ticket piece. Weapons to find for defeating cops, bouncers, and other enemies include a toy gun, a pea shooter, a chain saw, and a baseball bat. *Beavis and Butt-head* fans will appreciate how the game maintains the spirit, look, and humor of the show, and the puzzles are clever at times, but the action elements leave something to be desired. Much different than the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES versions.

Beggar Prince

Publisher: Super Fighter Team. Developer: C&E/Super Fighter Team. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 2006.

Originally released in 1996 in Taiwan as *Xin Qigai Wangzi*, *Beggar Prince* was translated into English by Super Fighter Team and released worldwide in 2006 (it works on both NTSC and PAL Genesis/Mega Drive systems). As the first commercially released Genesis game

since 1998, *Beggar Prince* was eagerly accepted by hardcore Genesis fans, who were largely pleased with the game's nice graphics, fun gameplay, simple combat system, and high production values (the cartridge shipped in a clamshell case with full color insert and glossy instruction manual). The storyline evokes Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, with players guiding a prince-turned-beggar as he visits towns, talks to characters, fights monsters (via numerous turn-based battles), and uses more than 30 types of magic.

The Berenstain Bears' Camping Adventure

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Realtime Associates. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The visuals in this game evoke the *Berenstain Bears* book series by Stan and Jan Berenstain while the gameplay borrows from any number of platformers, including *Sonic the Hedgehog*. Players guide Sister Bear or Brother Bear as they run, roll (via beach balls), bounce on trampolines, jump on platforms, leap over chasms, and hop on such enemies as bees, birds, skunks, and wolves. There are also the requisite items to collect: fish, butterflies, diamonds, flashlights, and honey. Gameplay has an overly familiar feel, but it does separate itself from the pack somewhat with nonlinear levels, light puzzling (such as throwing a rock at a platform to get it to move down), and two-player cooperative action. There are also teeter totters to try, walls to break through (with picks), secret rooms to discover, waterfalls to slide down, falling spikes to avoid, and bonus mini-games to play. Levels include Cave Adventure, Nature Walk, Honey Hunting, Haunted Forest, and Goin' Fishin'. A Sega Club title, this mildly enjoyable game is recommended for kids ages five to nine.

Best of the Best: Championship Karate

Publisher: Electro Brain. Developer: Loricel. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Like its SNES twin, *Best of the Best: Championship Karate* is loosely based on the 1989 film, which was simply called *Best of the Best*.

The kickboxing action is viewed from the side, with gamers using a variety of hits and kicks to pummel their opponent in elimination-style tournaments. Rounds last one minute, and boxers are rated according to strength, resistance, and reflexes, each of which can be built up in Training mode. Blows delivered to unprotected areas of the body deflate the fighter's health, which is represented by spotlights that gradually grow dark. Repeated tournament success lets players enter Kumate mode. Also released for the Game Boy and NES.

Beyond Oasis

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Ancient. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1995.

Boasting 24 megs of power and four save slots (via battery backup), the fast-paced *Beyond Oasis* puts players in the role of Prince Ali, who must save the mystical island of Oasis by stopping the resurrection of a ruthless sorcerer. As he travels through such areas as temples, caves, mountains, volcanoes, and dungeons, opening chests, searching for gems, and battling bats, ghosts, knights, ogres, soldiers, wizards, and other enemies, Ali can locate and then call upon the four wild spirits: fire, water, plant, and shadow, each with its own special uses. Ali can also jump, crouch, crawl, climb, punch, kick, use weapons (including swords, crossbows, and bombs), and pull off special fighting moves, making this a more action-oriented contest than most RPGs. Puzzle-solving involves such activities as flipping switches, lighting torches, using keys to open doors, and triggering plates. Viewed from overhead (at an angle), *Beyond Oasis* has large characters (for an RPG) and very nice production values.

Bible Adventures

Publisher: Wisdom Tree. Developer: Wisdom Tree. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

Bible Adventures for the Genesis features the same three games as the NES original: Noah's Ark, Baby Moses, and David and Goliath. The graphics have been spruced up, but the hallmarks of the NES version—clunky platforming and poor controls—remain un-

changed. Each game is only semi-faithful (so to speak) to its respective Bible story. For example, the animals don't simply come to the ark: Noah must gather them up. Other activities include delivering Moses to safety, collecting sheep while dodging lions and other animals, climbing trees, and battling Goliath with stones and a sling. Unlicensed.

Bill Walsh College Football

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Endorsed by longtime San Francisco 49ers coach Bill Walsh, who gives scouting reports for each team before a game, this cartridge is similar to *Madden NFL '94*, but with college rules. There are 48 teams (each represented by a city name), with 35 rated players (each represented by a number) per team. The game is compatible with EA Sports' 4 Way Play, meaning gamers can play two-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three, or four versus the computer. Modes of play include: Exhibition, Playoffs, and All-Time Playoffs. Other options and features include: audibles, bluffs, dives, reverse angle replays, onside kicks, inclement weather, adjustable quarter lengths, hurry-up offense, automatic or manual pass catch mode, and 68 classic college plays (including triple option, student body, and wishbone). The game is inferior to its SNES counterpart, which adds an 11-game season, five-player action, college marching band music after touchdowns, a rotating field (during changes of possession and replays), and a scaling football (during kick-offs and field goal attempts). The Sega CD version features FMV of Walsh.

Bill Walsh College Football 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

This follow-up to *Bill Walsh College Football* includes the following fresh features: 36 Division 1A teams (complete with authentic team logos); in-depth "Walsh Reports" scouting each team; customizable seasons (1–16 weeks); deep player stats throughout the season;

a Windowless Passing Mode; weekly national and divisional rankings; on-screen player ratings with fatigue factor; 36 new plays and formations (including veer, tee offense, and 4–4 D); and bowl games: Maple, Palm, Pecan, and Redwood (all fictional, of course). Like its progenitor, *Bill Walsh College Football 95* is compatible with EA Sports' 4 Way Play, meaning gamers can play two-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three, or four versus the computer.

Bimini Run

Publisher: Nuvision Entertainment. Developer: Microsmiths. Third-Person Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Bimini Run puts players in the role of Kenji Ohara, whose twin sister has been kidnapped by the evil Dr. Orca. Kenji pilots a red speedboat across treacherous seas, firing a bazooka (high and low) at choppers, attack boats, island bases, and killer sea creatures, avoiding rocks, sand bars, reefs, and other obstacles along the way. Players view the speedboat from behind, and a second gamer can join in as Luka (Kenji's close friend) to control the weaponry (while Kenji drives the boat). An overhead map shows players their current position and direction (along with the position of the enemies), and a control panel displays score, clock, compass, fuel gauge, and other helpful information. Missions should be completed as quickly as possible in order to avoid running out of fuel. More sophisticated in appearance than the average early Genesis title, *Bimini Run* boasts smooth scaling, clear voice effects, and highly unusual (if ultimately redundant) shooting action.

Bio-Hazard Battle

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A nice port of Sega's own 1992 arcade game, *Bio-Hazard Battle* lets players select from four different insect-like "Bioship fightercraft," each varying according to speed and weaponry (including plasma rings and the ultra-powerful seeker lasers), and each harboring a rotating, power-up gobbling orb. The organic na-

ture of the ships is unusual for the genre, as is the quirky, moody, sci-fi soundtrack. The objective is to stop a lethal virus by blasting away at nuclear crabs, mega amebas, electro-worms, and other freaky looking bio-beasts that inhabit a ruined cityscape, cavernous mineshafts, the ocean floor, and other lavishly rendered areas.

Blades of Vengeance

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Beam Software. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

In *Blades of Vengeance*, players select from three characters: a curvaceous Huntress (sword), a muscled Barbarian (axe), and a bearded Wizard (projectile-shooting staff), each of whom can walk, crouch, jump, crouch/attack, jump/attack, enter doors, climb ladders, and pull off normal and special attacks. The Huntress and Barbarian can also deliver sweeping overhead blows. Special attacks, which are only useable when the character is armored, include cross-bow triple missile (Huntress), whirling mace (Barbarian), and enhanced magical energy blast (Wizard). By traveling the castles, cliffs, bridges, hills, dungeons, and other areas, and by purchasing items in stores, players can obtain armor, keys, Midas rings (for turning enemies into bags of silver), blast wands, life hearts, and potions (invisibility, healing, force field, and protection against poisonous vapors). The monster-battling, platforming action evokes *Rastan*, which is a good thing.

Blaster Master 2

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Software Creations. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

The sequel to *Blaster Master* for the NES, *Blaster Master 2* finds Jason at the helm of his redesigned S.O.P.H.I.A. assault vehicle (complete with 360-degree firing field), looking to recapture his stolen weapons. Jason's armored cruiser starts off weak, but gains considerable power as the game wears on. *Blaster Master 2* is far more linear than *Blaster Master*, alienating the original game's many hardcore fans, and the overhead view Jason areas have been replaced with vehicle-based overhead areas,

which are harder to control. As expected, the game has better graphics than its predecessor, but it remains a disappointment. Followed by: *Blaster Master Boy* (GB) and *Blaster Master: Enemy Below* (GBC).

Blockbuster World Video Game

Championships 2

Publisher: Acclaim. Developer: Acclaim.
Sports/Basketball/Platform Shooter, 1 or 2
players (alternating, simultaneous). 1995.

One of the rarest, most valuable video games in existence, this cartridge was produced in limited quantities for Blockbuster Video's second World Video Game Championship, which also featured competition on the Super NES (via Rare's *Donkey Kong Country Competition Edition* cartridge). *Blockbuster World Video Game Championships 2* features truncated versions of two Genesis titles: *NBA Jam Tournament Edition*, which is two-on-two, arcade-based basketball; and *Judge Dredd*, a platform shooter based on the 1995 feature film (which was based on the British comic book series). After the championship tournament was over, Blockbuster store managers were ordered to destroy the competition carts, but, as fate would have it, a few managed to survive.

Blockout

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Featuring crisp, but simple graphics, *Blockout* borrows the falling block puzzle formula pioneered by *Tetris*, but switches to a top-down perspective with 3D shapes. As a block falls, players can rotate it around the horizontal x-axis, the vertical y-axis, and the z-axis. Pressing the start button quickly drops the shape to the bottom of the pit. The objective is to keep the game going by creating solid layers in order to make those blocks disappear. Unfortunately, once the blocks begin to pile up even a little bit, it's very difficult to complete layers or know how lower layers are configured, making for a frustrating game. Options let players select the following pit dimensions: depth (three to 12 layers), width (three to seven cubes

across), and height (three to seven cubes top to bottom). In addition, there are three different block sets: flat (flat shapes made of one to four cubes), basic (irregular combinations of three or four cubes), and extended (41 different shapes, all made of one to five cubes). In two-player split-screen mode, when a player finishes a layer, one gets added to the opponent's pit stack. Based on the 1989 Technos arcade game. Somewhat similar to: *Tetrisphere* (N64) and *Welltris* (PC).

B.O.B.

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Foley Hi Tech Systems. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

In *B.O.B.*, the titular robot (who looks like a giant bipedal ant) runs, jumps, ducks, hangs, and climbs his way through more than 45 colorful, futuristic levels, firing a laser gun (left, right, and straight up) at an assortment of aliens and robots while trying to find each exit. There are more than 40 enemy types in all, and B.O.B. can upgrade his weapon to triple-shot, flamethrower, rocket, bolt, wave, and punch (a giant fist). In addition, B.O.B. can grab "remotes" enabling him to freeze enemies, create a force shield, glide (via an umbrella), fly (via a helicopter hat), and dispense floating bombs. B.O.B. will also ride moving platforms and commandeer a *Jetsons*-like vehicle. Levels are timed, making for a harrowing challenge, but humorous animations and text balloons provide comic relief. Also released for the SNES.

Bonanza Bros.

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega.
Climbing/Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Viewed from the side, *Bonanza Bros.* finds investigator Mike (or Mike and Spike in two-player split-screen/coop mode) testing the security systems of 10 different properties, including Millionaire's Mansion, Casino, Jewelry Store, Art Museum, and Pyramid. As he searches each building, opening doors, bobbing in and out of hiding places, climbing stairs, jumping over obstacles, and grabbing valuables (gold bars, oil paintings, floppy disks,

and the like), he must avoid enemy guards, some of which carry shields. Once all the valuables have been found, Mike must proceed to the exit at the top of the building. The slow, stealthy movements of the protagonist(s) make this game different than most, as does the fact that shooting enemies only stuns them. Despite a slight flattening of the visuals, *Bonanza Bros.* is an excellent port of Sega's 1990 arcade game.

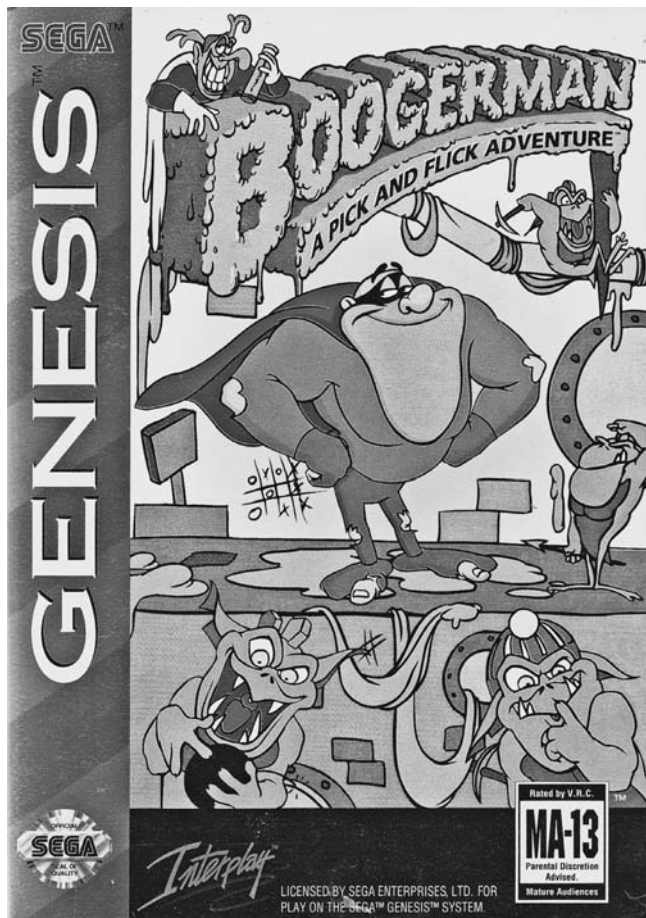
Bonkers

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Multi-Genre Action, 1 player. 1994.

Loosely based on the Disney animated TV series, *Bonkers* is essentially a collection of sim-

ple mini-games. As police officer Bonkers D. Bobcat, players have four cases to crack. While trying to put Ma Tow Truck out of business, players race up busy top-down freeways, bumping into enemy cars and shooting them with wads of gum. To apprehend The Rat, Bonkers, viewed from behind, throws bricks to build walls while moving right and left, dodging springs, dynamite, pogo sticks, and other projectiles. To prevent Harry the Handbag's goons from stealing museum treasures, Bonkers, viewed from behind, moves right and left while throwing donuts at rascally raccoons. To keep Mr. Big from blowing up a warehouse, players must walk around said warehouse (which scrolls a bit horizontally), dodging rats and opening wooden barrels and crates to find

pieces of Fall Apart Rabbit, who can deactivate the bombs. Ma Tow Truck is boring, but the other three games are fun. All feature perky sounds and cute, cartoonlike graphics. A Sega Club title. Much different than the SNES side-scrolling platform game of the same name.



As the title suggests, *Boogerman* is a gross game. Luckily, it is engrossing as well.

Boogerman: A Pick and Flick Adventure

Publisher: Interplay Productions. Developer: Interplay Productions. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

To enter the first level, Snotty Ragsdale, aka super-hero Boogerman, gets flushed down a toilet, setting the perfect stage for this gross, but fun game. Players guide a running, jumping, ducking, swinging, flying, balding, disgustingly rotund Boogerman through six multi-stage worlds—Flatulent Swamps, The Pits, Boogerville, Mucous Mountains, Nasal Caverns, and Pus Palace—burping, flicking snot, hocking loogies, and farting to battle Booger Meister and his “stenchmen” (including nose slugs, fart

ghosts, and toilet goblins). Aside from the potty-brained theme (with its many shades of greens and browns), *Boogerman* offers fairly standard platforming action, but excellent controls, solid level design (which includes hidden items and multiple pathways), and beautifully disgusting, 30-frames-per-second animation (created from more than 1,800 hand drawn animated cells) make it a standout title. A proposed sequel to this cult classic never saw the light of day. Also released for the SNES.

Boxing Legends of the Ring

Publisher: Electro Brain. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Boxing Legends of the Ring for the Genesis is very similar to its SNES counterpart, but with somewhat scratchier sound effects and animation that is not quite as smooth. Viewing the action from an over-the-shoulder perspective, gamers play as a boxer of their own design or as one of eight different middleweight greats, including Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Marvin Hagler. Three modes of play are available: Exhibition, Career, and Battle of the Legends. When a fighter gets woozy from too many hits, the screen flickers, creating a nice visual effect.

Bram Stoker's Dracula

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Traveller's Tales. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Based on the 1992 feature film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula* puts players in the role of Jonathan Harker (played by Keanu Reeves in the movie), who, on a quest to rescue Mina Murray, must work his way through such dangerous locales as Carfax Abbey and Castle Dracula, hacking and slashing rats, bats, wild dogs, phantom horses, and other creatures of the night. The sword Harker wields is super fast, similar to the sword in *Strider*, but gameplay and atmosphere evoke a poor man's *Castlevania*. Other weapons include guns and dynamite. Also released for the NES and SNES (and in a much different form for the Sega CD).

Brett Hull Hockey 95

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Radical Entertainment. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Unlike the SNES version, which scrolls vertically straight, *Brett Hull Hockey 95* for the Genesis offers a $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective of the rink (scrolling is less than smooth, and there is no scaling). Veteran broadcaster Al Michaels calls the action as gamers play an exhibition match, the playoffs (best of three, five, or seven games), or a full season. There are 26 standard teams (plus two all star squads), each named by city, but not mascot, thanks to the lack of NHL licensing. NHLPA licensing, however, allows for more than 600 real players, each of whom is rated from 1 to 100 according to aggressiveness, defensive skill, shooting, skating, stick handling, and strength. Players can adjust period length and season length and turn commentary, line changes, and penalties on or off. In addition to slap shots, wrist shots, face offs, and other such maneuvers, players can get into fights. *Brett Hull Hockey 95* is the sequel to *Brett Hull Hockey* (SNES), offering a solid, but unspectacular take on the popular sport.

Brutal: Paws of Fury

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Imagitec Design. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The Dali Llama has traveled the world in search of the greatest warriors, pitting them in a series of best-of-three, one-on-one fights against one another. Instead of the usual toughs found in such games as *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*, the fighters are cute anthropomorphic creatures like Kung Fu Bunny, Tai Cheetah, Kendo Coyote, Rhei Rat, Prince Leon the Lion, Foxy Roxy, and Ivan Bear (bosses Dali Llama and Karate Croc are unlockable). Each fighter can do light, medium, and hard punches and kicks, along with some character-specific special moves such as bite, flash kick, fire punch, earthquake, or roar. The game is a conventional fighter in some respects, but it innovates by forcing players to win fights in order to earn the aforementioned special moves.

Players can also earn taunts and “katas” (automatic combos). Also unusual is the password system that does not let players pick up where they left off. Rather, it takes players to the beginning, but lets them keep the special moves they’ve earned (along with belt position and win/loss total). Six-button controller recommended. The Sega CD version has cinema sequences, reworked CD music tracks, and a character called The Pantha. Also released for the SNES.

Bubba 'N' Stix

Publisher: Core Design. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Platform/Action Strategy, 1 player. 1994.

This clever and humorous game has players controlling a redneck named Bubba, who uses his anthropomorphic sidekick (a stick named Stix) to perform a variety of functions throughout the game’s five levels of alien bashing action: Waldo’s Starship, Alien Forest, Marine Temple, Volcano, and Spaceport. More than a simple hitting device, Stix is crucial to the player’s success, making *Bubba 'N' Stix* a much more strategy-oriented game than most platformers. Stix can be used as a projectile weapon, a snorkel, a pry bar, a platform, and much more. Originally packaged with a piece of Bubblicious bubble gum.

Bubble and Squeak

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Audiogenic Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

A cooperative one-player game, *Bubble and Squeak* puts players in control of Bubble, a bald, attitudinal little boy who shoots stars at worms, ducks, cats, and other enemies. Partway through the first level, a little blue alien named Squeak begins following Bubble, and at various points players must command Squeak to follow or wait. Squeak, who is resistant to enemies and their fire, serves a variety of purposes, such as helping collect items (such as gems, coins, and springs) or throwing Bubble up to elevated areas. Bubble can also ride Squeak the way Mario rides Yoshi. The goal is to get both characters to

the end of each level, and this sometimes requires Bubble to kick Squeak up ramps, keep Squeak from drowning, or otherwise lend him a helping hand. The game evokes *Sonic the Hedgehog* at times, such as when a spinning Squeak rapidly pinballs through certain areas. Gumball machines power-up Bubble, and submarine icons let gamers play side-scrolling shooter bonus rounds. Cartoonish graphics and light puzzling (including flipping switches and placing springs in strategic places) characterize this cute, largely agreeable platformer.

Bubsy In: Clawed Encounters of the Furred Kind

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Al Baker & Associates. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

Bubsy is infamous for being a *Sonic the Hedgehog* copycat (so to speak), minus the fun gameplay. Players guide the titular bobcat as he takes on the Woolies, an alien race that has stolen all of Earth’s yarn. Bubsy collects yarn balls (for extra points), leaps on platforms, and pounces on such enemies as beavers, grumbleweeds, tree frogs, snapagators, sand sharks, and lightbulb bugs. He can also glide, bounce on tree branches, go down waterslides, and ride cars, roller coasters, rocket cars, and log rafts. There are seven music tracks and 16 large, colorful, non-linear levels, including such areas as a forest, an amusement park, a village, a moving train, caves, a desert, and a spaceship. All that sounds okay, but the game has too many flaws. Bubsy tries to emulate Sonic’s edginess, but he comes across as a mere brat wearing a stupid T-shirt adorned with an exclamation point. He can run pretty fast, but will oftentimes run straight into deadly obstacles. Blind jumps, poor level design, one-hit kills, the lack of weaponry, frustrating gameplay (landing in water is lethal, for example), and loose, lagging controls make this one of the more disappointing platformers of the era. Surprisingly, the game sold a lot of copies and was fairly well received upon initial release. Nearly identical to the SNES version, which was released first.

Bubsy II

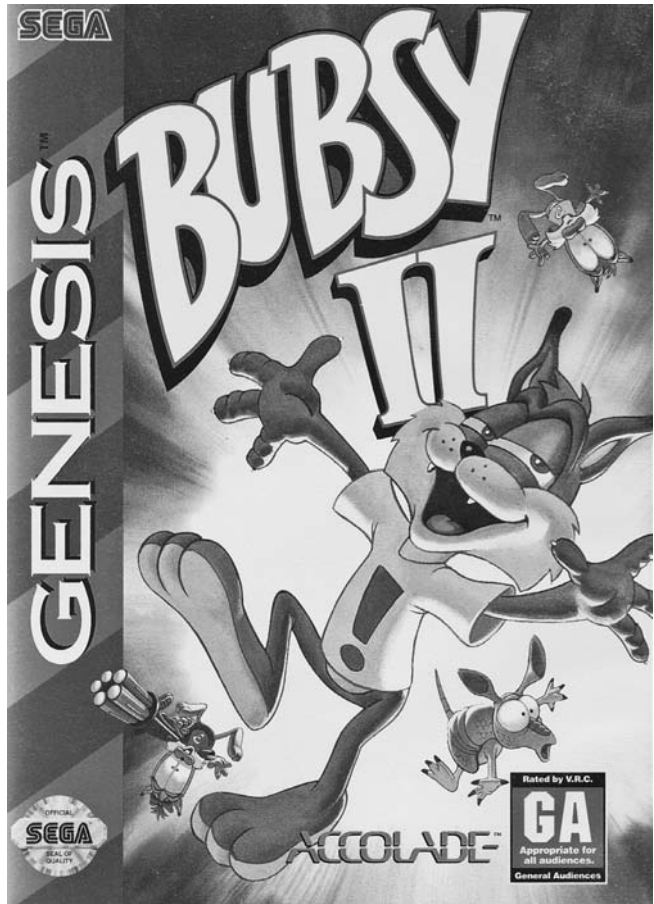
Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Team Bubsy. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Bubsy II is a more ambitious game than its predecessor, but it still falls well short of such similar titles as *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Super Mario World*. Players once again guide Bubsy the Bobcat, but controls are a bit tighter, and three hits now kill Bubsy instead of just one, reducing cheap deaths. Instead of yarn, Bubsy collects marbles (for extra points) and trading cards, the latter of which are used for purchasing portable holes (letting Bubsy exit a level at any time), T-shirts (extra lives), a diving suit, smart bombs, and ammunition for a Nerf Ball-zooka. Yes, Bubsy now has weapons, which makes battling enemies easier. In addition, 2 Player Friendly mode has a second gamer tagging along as a Bubsy's niece or nephew, collecting treasure and throwing bananas at enemies. 2 Player Feisty mode has the second player making things difficult by placing banana peels for Bubsy to slip on. The game boasts four difficulty levels, three mini-games (Frogapult, Armadillo Drop, and Liquid Lunacy), five worlds, and 30 levels of play (including areas where Bubsy flies a rocket and a biplane). Also released for the Game Boy and SNES. Followed by: *Bubsy in Fractured Furry Tales* (Jaguar) and *Bubsy 3D* (PS1).

Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Strategic Simulations. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

Originally packaged with a thick booklet that includes 84 pages of instructions and 56 pages of hints, *Buck Rogers* finds players on a mission to destroy the evil empire's dreaded



The star of *Bubsy II*, Bubsy the Bobcat, never took off like Nintendo's Mario or Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog.

Doomsday device. Gamers select a party of six adventurers from three races—human, desert runner (run long distances and fight with claws), and tinker (good with tools and medicine)—and also select their gender and career: medic, rogue, rocket jock, or warrior. Similar to *Dungeons & Dragons*, gamers roll for the following character attributes: constitution, charisma, dexterity, strength, and technological know-how. In addition, characters vary according to such abilities as programming, rocket repair, first aid, stealth, climbing, jury rigging, and rocket piloting. There are more than 50 items to discover and use via a point-and-click inventory system. The game employs two combat systems: tactical land based (including battles against dozens of alien life forms) and first-person ship to ship (includ-

ing blasting ships out of the sky with cannons, lasers, and missiles). *Countdown to Doomsday* is essentially a sci-fi take on Strategic Simulations' series of AD&D "gold box" computer games, such as *Pool of Radiance* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds*.

Budokan: The Martial Spirit

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Ray Tobey. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

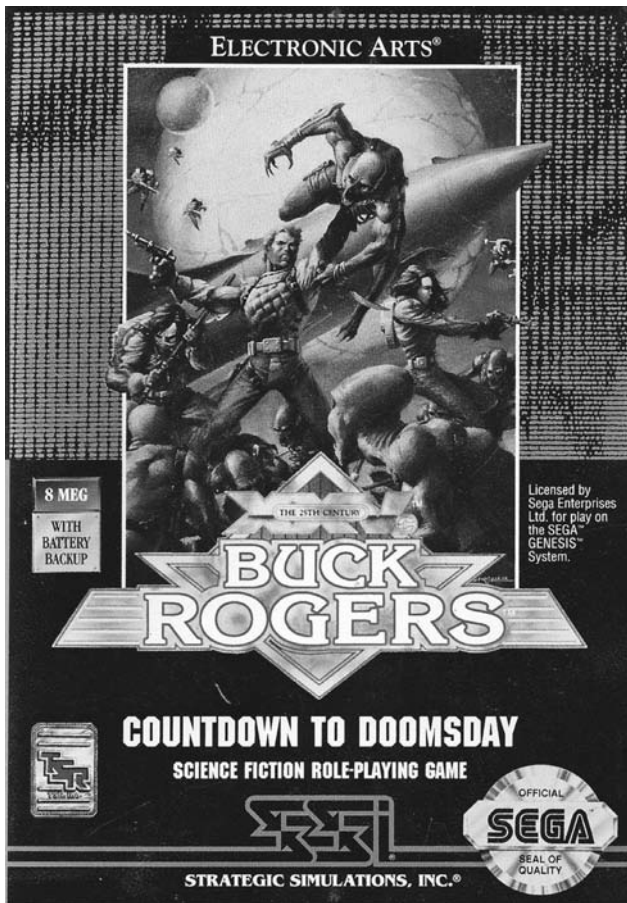
A far cry from the button-mashing bombast of such popular brawlers as *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter II*, *Budokan* is a strategic fighting game that casts the player in the role of

a student at the dojo of a Sensei. The player must practice four types of martial arts—karate, bo (fighting with a staff), nunchaku, and kendo (fighting with a stick)—each of which has its own set of maneuvers and fighting styles (in addition to standard punches, kicks, spins, and sweeps). Once the player feels he or she has become a martial arts expert, it's time to enter the tournament, which is a series of one-on-one fights against 12 different opponents of varying abilities and weaponry. If the player does too many moves in too quick a succession, his or her fighter will lose a prohibitive amount of ki and stamina, meaning fights should be conducted thoughtfully and judiciously. Many will find the action tedious, overly subtle, and poorly controlled, choosing to leave the game safely in the past.

Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Probe Entertainment/Climax Group. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1996.

Released late in the life of the Genesis, *Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble* has the famous Wascally Wabbit running, jumping, climbing, sliding (down ladders and poles), using weapons (including glue pots, carrot bombs, and a singing sword), and flipping switches through eight cartoonish levels: Duck Rabbit Duck, Bully for Bugs, Knighty Knight Bugs, Hare-Abian Nights, Haunted Hare, Spaced Out Bunny, Mad as a Mars Hare, and Hareway to the Stars. The objective/mission in each level varies considerably, from Bugs flipping signs so Elmer will think it is duck season to racing around an arena to build a bull trap (for Bully) to engaging in a space race against Marvin the Martian (while shooting asteroids). The game is playable, but can prove frustrating, especially for younger gamers. Also released for the Game Gear.



First appearing in a Philip Nowlan story called "Armageddon 2419 A.D.," Buck Rogers was introduced in 1928 in the pages of *Amazing Stories*. This is an RPG rendition of his interstellar adventures.

Bulls versus Blazers and the NBA

Playoffs

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The third game in the “versus” series (following *Lakers versus Celtics* and *Bulls vs Lakers*), *Bulls versus Blazers* lets players select from all 16 NBA playoffs teams (based on the 1992 season), plus the East and West All Star squads. Players can now call defensive plays, create their own All Star teams, and substitute for fatigued players using complete team rosters. Once again, star players each have their own animations and signature moves, such as Scottie Pippen’s double pump jam, Derrick Coleman’s gorilla dunk, and Shawn Kemp’s off-the-glass jam. *Bulls versus Blazers* plays similar to the previous two games (meaning the action is slow, but fairly well programmed), and the added features are underwhelming. The SNES version does not let gamers call defensive plays or create their own All Star teams.

Bulls vs Lakers and the NBA Playoffs

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The follow-up to *Lakers versus Celtics*, *Bulls vs Lakers* is similar to its progenitor in a lot of ways, but it does offer a number of new features, including alley-oops, current game stats, home team logos and colors on the courts, improved passing, VCR-style instant replays, and team fouls counted. In addition, an innovative T-meter free throw system lets players control the accuracy and power of foul shots. All 16 teams from the 1991 NBA Playoffs are included (plus an East and a West All Star squad), and each star player has signature moves and animations, such as Karl Malone’s in your face slam, Hakeem Olajuwon’s 360° jam, Tim Hardaway’s UTEP 2-step, and Michael Jordan’s air reverse. Followed by: *Bulls versus Blazers and the NBA Playoffs*.

Burning Force

Publisher: Namco. Developer: Namco. Third-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

A solid port of Namco’s 1989 arcade game (minus the two-player alternating mode), *Burning Force* is similar to *Space Harrier*, but not as fast or as fun. Players view the action from behind a “space fighter” named Hiromi, who rides an airbike and uses a variety of lasers and missiles to shoot aliens, bosses, columns, and other enemies and obstacles. Jumping ramps lets players grab power-ups, but, unlike *Space Harrier*, the action stays close to the ground most of the time. The sound effects are generic, but the enemies are nicely illustrated, and the soundtrack is excellent.

Cadash

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Cyclone System. Adventure/Side-Scrolling Platform/Role-Playing Game, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on Taito’s 1989 arcade game, which offered four-player action via linked cabinets, *Cadash* lets players select from two different characters: a fast and agile fighter, who is equipped with melee attacks and a shield; and a slow but powerful mage, who wields a staff and can perform various spells. Each character battles monsters to gain experience points, finds keys to unlock doors, and collects gold to purchase herbs, extra lives, antidotes, weapons, and armor. Regrettably, the Genesis port lacks two of the arcade game’s four playable characters: the priestess and the ninja, both of whom made it into the TurboGrafx version.

Caesar’s Palace

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Illusions Gaming Company. Gambling, 1 player. 1993.

Caesar’s Palace has gamers walking around the famous Las Vegas casino (which is empty of people other than the player), trying their hand at eight types of nicely programmed gambling simulators: Keno; Video Poker; Blackjack (includes splits, double bets, and insurance); Slot Machines (Jackpot Jungle, Champions, and Home Run); Roulette (featuring nine types of bets); Craps (guess the roll of dice before it is thrown); Video Horse Racing (featuring single, quinella, and trifecta bets); and Scratchers (60 Yard Fight, Match Two, and Triple Jacks).

ATM machines let players withdraw money, keep track of their winnings, and play the aforementioned scratch-off games. Special invitation-only VIP rooms offer high stakes gambling. Similar to *Super Caesar's Palace* (SNES), but without the Red Dog game. Also released (in varying forms) for the Game Boy, NES, and Game Gear.

Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Acme Interactive. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Like its superior (to some degree) SNES counterpart, *Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball* for the Genesis has generic teams (18) and generic stadiums (three), complemented by player sub-

stitutions, player ratings (for defense, speed, and arm strength), infield and outfield shifts, TV-style camera angles, and cinematic views of close plays. Gameplay is solid (if unspectacular), and there's a Homerun Derby mode in which points are rewarded for standard hits as well as homers. Cal "Iron Man" Ripken Jr. played his entire Major League career with the Baltimore Orioles.

Caliber .50

Publisher: Mentrix Software. Developer: Visco Corporation. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Based on Romstar's 1989 arcade game, which is called *Cal. 50 Caliber-Fifty*, *Caliber .50* for the Genesis is similar to such run-and-gun shooters as *Ikari Warriors* and *Commando*, but is slower, less explosive, and nowhere near as fun. Players guide Captain "Windbreak" Addis through Vietnam-like jungles, using a machine gun, a rocket launcher, a flamethrower, and grenades to blow away helicopters, tanks, villagers, communist troops, and such ill-fitting bosses as giant monkeys and turtles. In comparison to its coin-op counterpart, this port lacks two-player action and rotary control. In addition, the arcade game has more graphical detail.

California Games

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Sports/Extreme, 1-9 players (alternating). 1991.

Despite added visual detail, *California Games* for the Genesis is very similar to its NES and SMS counterparts. Players compete in six events, each carried over from the original 1987 Epyx computer classic: Half Pipe Skateboarding (perform kick turns, aerial turns, and hand plants on side-view ramp); Foot Bag (a.k.a. Hacky Sack); Surfing (ride wave, catch



Caesar's Palace features such Vegas-style gambling games as keno, video poker, blackjack, and roulette.

air, perform 360s, avoid wiping out); Roller Skating (skate boardwalk, jump and spin over sand, cracks, banana peels, and beach balls); BMX Bike Racing (perform jumps, wheelies, flips, 360s, and table tops on side-view course); and Flying Disk (throw Frisbee back-and-forth). Followed by: *California Games II* (SNES).

Captain America and the Avengers

Publisher: Data East. Developer: ISCO. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Captain America and the Avengers doesn't reinvent the beat-'em-up genre, nor is it the greatest super-hero game of all time, but it is an

entertaining (if mindless) game. Players guide Marvel Comics' Captain America (shield), Iron Man (plasma beams), the Vision (solar beams), or Hawkeye (arrows) through five fairly routine stages, punching, kicking, and firing projectiles at thugs and at such bosses as Juggernaut, Mandarin, Ultron, Mammoth Robot, and the Red Skull. In addition, the heroes can throw barrels and other items. Each character employs some method of flight (in addition to walking), with certain areas offering rudimentary side-scrolling shooter action. Outlandish voice effects complement the five levels of play: The Avengers, Target Town, Challenge from the Bottom of the Sea (where Namor makes an appearance), The Giant Laser Cannon, and The Final Showdown. Quicksilver occasionally runs by, leaving health-boosting life discs while the Wasp, who is activated by grabbing a "W" power-up, acts as a protector during shooting areas. A special Training Mode offers one-on-one fighting action. Based on the four-player Data East arcade game (1991). Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, and Game Gear. Much different than the NES version.



Starring various Marvel Comics super-heroes, including Iron Man, Hawkeye, and the Vision, *Captain America and the Avengers* is a port of the 1991 Data East arcade game.

Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

Spurred by jealousy, the evil witch Mizrabel has kidnapped Minnie Mouse. To rescue her, a nicely animated Mickey must brave five beautifully illustrated levels (Enchanted Forest, Toyland, Storm, Library, and Castle), avoiding poison apples, buzzing toy airplanes, huge boulders, and other obstacles while throwing apples, marbles, and candles at mushrooms, knights, bonefish, toy soldiers, and other enemies. In addition, Mickey must swim,

swing over pits, run down slopes and across crumbling bridges, pounce on enemies, duck under enemy fire, and more. There's even a level (Toyland) that turns upside down. Like its much different Master System counterpart, *Castle of Illusion* for the Genesis is delightful and engaging from beginning to end. The Game Gear version is similar to the Master System game.

Castlevania: Bloodlines

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Like *Contra: Hard Corps*, *Castlevania: Bloodlines* brings a great series to the Genesis and does so in spectacular fashion. This time,

instead of playing as Simon Belmont, gamers can select from two different characters: John Morris uses a whip to swing past obstacles while Eric Lecarde wields a lance that can spin and make him jump higher (leading to different pathways). Both heroes battle ravens, skeletons, Medusa heads, and other creatures, both walk up and down castle stairs and jump on platforms, and both can pick up a variety of special items, including weapon power-ups, health, battle axes, boomerangs, sacred water, and more (as in previous games in the series, destroying candles reveals items). The game is easier than *Castlevania III* (NES), especially in terms of bosses (other than Dracula himself), but it's still challenging enough to make you use your continues. There are six multi-stage

levels of play, giving gamers such beautifully rendered environments as a German munitions factory, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the French Versailles Palace. Visual effects, such as the gamer walking upside down and the screen dividing into sections, play a major role in this phenomenal cartridge. Followed by: *Castlevania: Dracula X* (SNES), *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (PSX), *Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow* (GBA), and various other sequels.



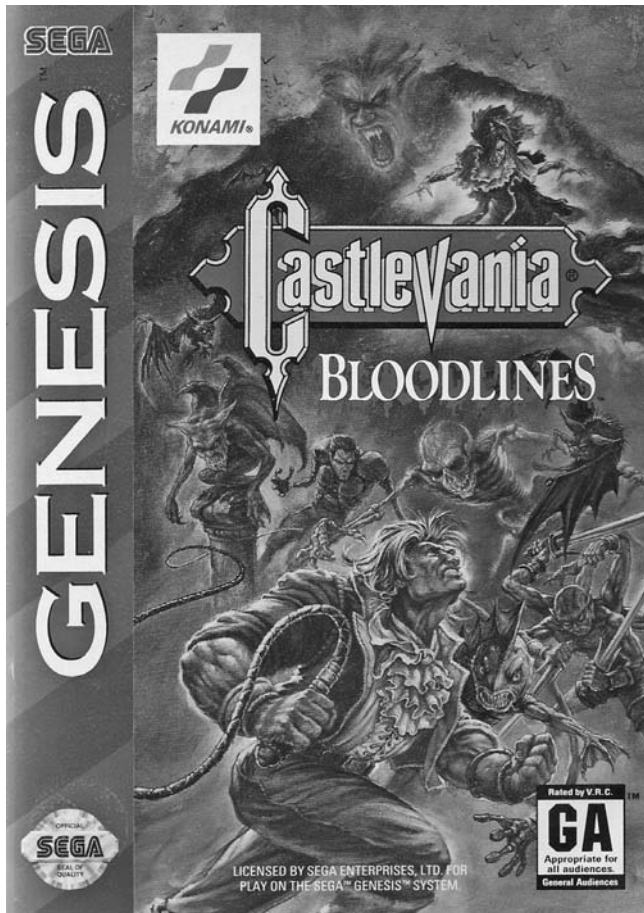
Charming, creative, and fun, *Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse* is nothing less than one of the best platformers of the era.

Centurion: Defender of Rome

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Bits of Magic. Turn-Based Strategy/Real-Time Strategy, 1 player. 1991.

Centurion: Defender of Rome takes place in the year 275 B.C. as players defend Rome in hopes of becoming Caesar, the ultimate objective being to rule the world. Gameplay consists of: choosing battle formations and tactics; directing individual units; forming and negotiating alliances; plundering and negotiating with prov-

inces; protecting and taxing provinces; staving off rebellions; retreating (when absolutely necessary); strengthening treaties; raising, adding to, and upgrading legions; building fleets to move legions overseas to fight foreign navies; engaging in land battles (including flanking, routing, and doubling up); hosting sea battles (including ramming, boarding for hand-to-hand combat, and firing arrows and catapults); staging chariot races and gladiatorial contests; and more. Battles are viewed from an isometric perspective while chariot races scroll vertically. In the instruction manual, designer Kellyn Beck credits the movies *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *Spartacus* (1960) as inspirations in creating the game.



A Genesis exclusive, *Castlevania: Bloodlines* is an excellent entry in the popular *Castlevania* series, which began on the NES in 1987.

Chakan: The Forever Man

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

Based on the comic book series created by Robert A. Kraus, *Chakan* has a much darker look and premise than most platformers of the era. Players guide the titular warrior through four timed portals of the supernatural underworld: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Chakan, who is haunted from his deal with Death that gave him an accursed eternal life, uses a pair of long blades to battle stinging spiders, biting bats, flying insectoids, spiked lizards, giant worms, and other creepy creatures. Chakan always carries his twin swords, but he can add a battering mallet, a scythe, a battle axe, and a grappling hook (for climbing walls and swinging over pits) to his arsenal. In addition, Chakan uses combinations of potions gathered to perform such magic as shielding from enemy sight, slowed enemies, new passageways, upgraded swords, and super high jumping ability. A difficult game with spookily atmospheric graphics and sounds, *Chakan* is not for the faint of heart (or thumb). Also released for the Game Gear.

Champions World Class Soccer

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Champions World Class Soccer features a fairly typical elevated side-view of a scrolling, horizontal field. Setting it apart somewhat from the pack is a small radar near the top of the screen displaying the field positions of the players and the location of the ball. The game also includes: 32 international teams (each of varying speed, offensive, and defen-

sive characteristics); a 52-game Tournament mode; three methods for tending goal (automatic, semi-automatic, and manual); four game text language options (English, Spanish, French, and German); four different team formations; fouls turned on or off; and selectable halve lengths: 15, 30, and 45 minutes. Player moves include passes, traps, throw-ins, corner kicks, headers, bicycle kicks, shoves, slide tackles, goalie catches, throws, punts, dives, and pounces. Also released for the SNES.

Championship Bowling

Publisher: Mentrix Software. Developer: Soft Machine. Sports/Bowling, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

Championship Bowling is a fun, nicely programmed, arcade-style game that most anyone can enjoy. The bowling action is simple, but it gives players plenty of options, including: ball weight; who throws first; fast or slow lanes; and three game modes: Normal, Spare (knock down different spares), and Bonus (where specific pins are worth different points). Gamers can bowl as one of four characters: finesse bowler Mark, finesse bowler Linda, power bowler Leroy, or smart bowler Dana (the only left-hander in the group). The bottom half of the screen depicts the lanes while the top half has windows showing character animations, the crowd, and a close-up of the pins. When it's time to roll the ball, players line up left and right and use a meter to determine ball spin, an arrow to aim the ball, and a power gauge to determine the strength of the throw. Similar to: *Super Bowling* (SNES).

Championship Pool

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Bitmasters. Sports/Billiards, 1–8 players (alternating, 2-player simultaneous). 1993.

Like its NES and SNES counterparts, *Championship Pool* for the Genesis is loaded down with features. There are four modes of play: Challenge (practice), Tournament (8-ball and 9-ball World Championship), Party, and Freestyle, the latter of which lets players invent new rules, make up their own games, and practice trick shots. Players can also view instant

replays, set the camera for angled close-ups, choose songs on the jukebox, and set the spin of the ball and the power of the shot. The table is viewed from overhead, but the cue stick and players are not visible. The game employs a cursor for aiming and a phantom ball for pre-viewing approximately where a hit ball will land. This versatile pool simulator is endorsed by the Billiards Congress of America, and it shows.

Championship Pro-Am

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Rare. Miniature/Radio Control Racing/Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

More of a port than a sequel, *Championship Pro-Am* for the Genesis is similar to *R.C. Pro-Am* for the NES, but with superior graphics, a two-player mode, and additional computer-controlled cars on the twisting, turning tracks. The isometric/overhead viewpoint returns, as does the fun of grabbing vehicle upgrades, bombing and shooting missiles at other cars, driving over zippers for temporary speed boosts (an innovative aspect of the original game), and avoiding puddles, oil slicks, and other hazards. To earn a new racer, players must driver over letters spelling out “champion” (as opposed to “Nintendo” in *R.C. Pro-Am*).

Chase H.Q. II

Publisher: Taito. Developer: ITL. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 player. 1992.

The Genesis sequel to Taito's *Chase H.Q.* coin-op (1988), *Chase H.Q. II* is similar to its progenitor. Players, viewing the action from behind their vehicle (à la *OutRun*), cruise down twisting, turning streets, weaving in and out of other cars, trying to repeatedly ram a criminal car. Unlike the original game, this one lets players select from three different vehicles to commandeer: a 4×4, a sports car (fast, but weak attacks), and a semi truck (slow, but strong attacks). Each vehicle is equipped with an accelerator, brakes, and a limited number of turbo boosters. While trying to catch up with the target car, players must avoid road obstacles (such

as signs and rocks), enemy bullets, and bombs (which are dropped by a helicopter). Like the other titles in the series, *Chase H.Q. II* is a nice change of pace from the many racing games in which the objective is to simply reach checkpoints. Released the same year as *Super Chase: Criminal Termination* (arcade). Followed by: *Super Chase H.Q.* (SNES).

Chavez II

Publisher: American Softworks. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Chavez* (SNES), *Chavez II* is similar to *Boxing Legends of the Ring* (in fact, it uses the same game engine), but instead of eight real professional boxers, it features only one: Julio Cesar Chavez. The view is from behind the player's boxer (à la *Super Punch-Out!!*), with gamers using hooks, jabs, uppercuts, crosses, straights, and a super punch to fight their way to victory or defeat. There are two game modes: Exhibition and Career, the latter of which lets players create their own boxer in terms of appearance, name, and fighting style (military, street, or Olympic). Created boxers vary in terms of punch power, chin, and stamina, and gamers can distribute strength points to their boxer's various types of punches. Ranked 10th in the beginning, players work their way up the ranks, earning more distributable strength points as they go. Much of the in-game text is in Spanish, but the manual is fully bilingual. Also released for the SNES.

Chester Cheetah: Too Cool to Fool

Publisher: Kaneko. Developer: System Vision. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Chester Cheetah: Too Cool to Fool puts players in the role of the cartoon Cheetos mascot, who is being held captive at the Four Corners Zoo by evil zookeeper Mean Eugene. To try and escape, Chester orders a motorcycle, but Eugene steals it and hides the parts all around the zoo. To retrieve the parts, Chester must walk, crawl, run, climb, ride (a boat and a mine cart), and jump (on platforms and enemies) through five levels: Four Corners Zoo

Park (lots of sewer pipes), Monkey Pits (jungle theme), Gator Alley (lots of water), Hidden Caves (includes mine cart sequence), and Bird House (Chester flies). In order to beat each level, Chester must find the motorcycle part. Hip-O and Funky Monkey are on hand to help, and Chester can grab such useful items as Cheetos paw snacks (health), sunglasses (reveals hidden badges), guitars (invincibility), sneakers (for dashing), skateboards (for entering bonus stages), and paw badges (100 of which grant an extra life). The game is playable, but has a crude cartoony look, and the action is slow and even frustrating at times. In addition, the controls have a delayed reaction. Similar to: *Bubsy in Clawed Encounters of the Furred Kind*. Also released for the SNES.

Chester Cheetah: Wild Wild Quest

Publisher: Kaneko. Developer: Kaneko. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

In this sequel to *Too Cool to Fool*, Mean Eugene has hidden Chester's map to Hip City and destroyed it, spurring the Cheetos mascot on a countrywide quest to retrieve the map pieces. Chester will walk, run, and jump (on platforms and on skateboarders, birds, pigs, crabs, sharks, and other enemies) through such cities as: Euphreaka; Not-So-Great Falls, Montana; Unclearwater, Florida; and Little Shock Arkansas. In each level, Chester must find a piece of the map prior to exiting, and at the end of each level he must fight a boss (such as a fat lady toting beach gear). Chester will also grab bags of Cheetos and individual Cheetos Paws. As in the vastly superior *Super Mario World*, Chester enters the levels in non-linear fashion via a world map (shaped like the United States in this case). Hampered by cheap hits and poor collision detection, *Wild Wild Quest* nevertheless looks, sounds, and plays better than *Too Cool to Fool*, but that's not saying a whole lot. Both games have ridiculous instruction manuals filled with forced rhyming.

Chi Chi's Pro Challenge Golf

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Coconuts Japan. Sports/Golf, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

Endorsed by Juan “Chi Chi” Rodriguez, *Chi Chi's Pro Challenge Golf* features the standard behind-the-golfer perspective, with the view switching to overhead once the ball has been hit. Not so standard is the gameplay, which eschews the traditional three-press swing meter in favor of a simple power meter. After selecting a club, players adjust their aim (an overhead map is helpful here), position crosshairs on a golf ball icon, press a button to start the power meter, and press a button (when the meter is at the preferred level) to swing the club. There are four modes of play — Stroke, Match, Handicap, and Tournament — and 23 computer opponents, each rated according to control, approach, and putting. Opponents vary according to play style as well: careful, balanced, or aggressive. There are two fictional courses (U.S. and Japan) featuring basic water and sand hazards.

Chiki Chiki Boys

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Visco Corporation. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1993.

Chiki Chiki Boys is a nice port of Capcom's 1990 arcade game, but without the two-player simultaneous mode. Players select from a pair of twins: a swordsman who can perform magic and a magician who wields a sword. After entering one of three areas on a world map (Earth, Heavens, or the Sea), players will open treasure chests (which reveal helpful or harmful items), run and jump on platforms, snorkel under water, and battle rock monsters, scorpions, skeletons, vampires, dragons, crabs, fish, and other creatures (including tough bosses). Colorful, cartoonish graphics and fun hack-'n'-slash action make the game a winner.

Chuck Rock

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

In *Chuck Rock*, players guide the titular caveman as he walks, ducks, and jumps through five levels of prehistoric pitfalls and perils, including a volcano, a jungle, an ocean (where he swims), an Ice Age, and a dinosaur

graveyard. To battle the Stone Age beasts he'll encounter, Chuck uses a belly-butting maneuver, a jump-kick attack, and some nifty rock throwing abilities. Rocks also help Chuck sink under ocean creatures, form steps across treacherous terrain, and, with the help of crocodiles, propel himself upward. In addition, Chuck hops on frogs (to cross water), gobbles food for extra points, fights dinosaur bosses, gets fired through the air from the trunks of woolly mammoths, and more. Although it's not quite on par with such topnotch side-scrollers as *Super Mario Bros.* and *Bonk's Adventure*, *Chuck Rock* is fairly enjoyable. The Sega CD version has animated intros, better sound, and nine new stages (for a total of 28). Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES.

Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Unlike Chuck Rock, who belly-butts enemies, his six-month-old son wields a caveman club. Players guide Chuck Junior as he runs, jumps, swings, and battles his way through six multi-stage worlds of prehistoric action (plus four bonus games, including a river race). The game lacks the variety, ingenuity, and overall fun factor of the similar looking *Bonk's Adventure* (TG-16), but it is fun, and it's embellished with certain gameplay-related flourishes, such as Chuck Junior riding on Tarby the Tiger's back (to leap across large gaps), catapulting via Geoff the Strongman, getting spit out by Vinny Venus Flytrap, and hitching rides on Thomas the Turtle (across water) and Bird Reynolds (among other bad puns, the enemy who kidnapped Chuck Rock is named Brick Jagger). In addition to hitting dinosaurs, cavemen, monkeys, sharks, and the like, Chuck Junior's club can be used to bash rocks. Also, he can climb on top of the club to dodge various obstacles. A baby bottle on the bottom right side of the screen acts as a health meter, and Junior can add to his health by collecting bottles spread throughout the levels. The Sega CD version has animated intros, better sound, and a new “hard” mode of play. Also released for the Game Gear.

Clay Fighter

Publisher: Interplay Productions. Developer: Ringer Studios. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Like the superior (to some degree) SNES version from 1993, *Clay Fighter* for the Genesis lets players select from eight different claymation fighters, each of which is distinctively quirky: Bad Mr. Frosty, Blob, Blue Swede Goo (an Elvis impersonator), Bonker, Helga, Icky-bod Clay, Taffy, and Tiny. A shallow, sluggish fighting system limits the appeal for hardcore gamers, but cute, colorful graphics and funny voice effects give the game value as a novelty item. The wacky special moves, such as the Taffy tornado and the singing attack, provide short-term amusement. Released the same year as *Clay Fighter: Tournament Edition* (SNES). Followed by: *Clay Fighter 63 1/3* (N64) and *Clay Fighter: Sculptor's Cut* (N64).

Cliffhanger

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Malibu Interactive. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1993.

A dreadful take on the 1993 feature film, *Cliffhanger* puts players in the Sylvester Stallone role of Gabe Walker, a mountain rescue specialist who works his way through seven mountainous levels, punching and kicking and using knives and guns on bad guys. There are bridges to cross, steep cliffs to climb (while being shot at), floating logs to jump on, and chasms to rope-walk over. One particularly harrowing (not to mention frustrating) stage has players running down a mountain, dodging rocks and jumping over fallen trees while trying to stay ahead of an avalanche. Campfires replenish lost energy. The combat sections of *Cliffhanger* play like a (very) poor man's *Streets of Rage*. Prior to confronting the evil Eric Qualen, players must battle a number of other end-of-level bosses. Released in varying forms for the Game Boy, Game Gear, NES, SNES, and Sega CD, the latter version augmented with snowboarding levels, CD quality music (including select cuts from the movie soundtrack), and 20 minutes of digitized film clips.

Clue

Publisher: Parker Brothers. Developer: Sculptured Software. Board Game, 1–6 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Just like the classic board game on which it is based, *Clue* for the Genesis lets up to six aspiring sleuths try and solve the mystery of who murdered Mr. Boddy, owner of Boddy Mansion. Players, as suspect Colonel Mustard, Mrs. Peacock, Professor Plum, Miss Scarlet, Mr. Green, or Mrs. White, must uncover whodunit, where it was done, and with what weapon. This is achieved by rolling dice (with a lifelike human hand), moving a piece around a game board (which is viewed from overhead), exploring Boddy Mansion, suggesting who committed the crime and with what, conducting interrogations, and making an accusation. It is recommended that players write down what they learn in their detective notepad. Five difficulty levels are available: amateur, gumshoe, sleuth, P.I., and Detective. Harder levels have more negative clues, such as “Mr. Green was not in the lounge.” While the video game version of *Clue* does an excellent job of emulating the original board game (the music even evokes the 1985 feature film), it is awkward to have the other players look away from the screen while one player looks at his or her cards. Also released for the SNES and Philips CD-i.

Coach K College Basketball

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Hitmen Productions. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Endorsed by Duke Blue Devils coach Mike “Coach K” Krzyzewski, *Coach K College Basketball* uses the *NBA Live* engine to excellent effect, making it one of the best college hoops titles of the era. The game is loaded with features, including: animations; injuries; substitutions; cheerleaders; adjustable foul calling; battery backup; crowd chants; shattered backboards; on-the-fly play calling; turbo-charged fast breaks; alley oops; a weekly top 25 poll; mid-air passes; and more than 50 offensive plays and 14 defensive sets. Players select one of 32 top Division I-A teams for use in an exhibi-

tion game, an entire season, or a customizable tournament (four, eight, 16, or 32 teams). The back-and-forth action offers a 30-degree perspective, giving players a nice look at the court, and free throws are viewed from behind the shooter. Excellent controls, large characters, and nice graphics cement the deal.

College Football USA 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

A terrific follow-up to *Bill Walsh College Football 95*, *College Football USA 96* lets players take the field as one of 108 Division 1A schools, trying to win the National Championship. Although player names are excluded, abilities (based on 1995 stats) and jersey numbers do correspond with real players. In addition, the game boasts authentic team names, logos, and bowl games (Fiesta, Orange, Sugar, and Rose). Other features and options include: substitutions, injuries, audibles, fake snaps, spins, hurdles, dives, blocked kicks, interceptions, laterals, savable records, and three different game lengths. There are 400 plays from which to choose, including such standbys as the Hail Mary and the wishbone. When the action is in passing mode, windows appear near the top of the screen, letting players view all five receivers. Similar to: *Madden NFL 96*.

College Football USA 97: The Road to New Orleans

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Tiburon Entertainment. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

The Road to New Orleans looks and plays almost exactly like *College Football USA 96*, but for a few additions to the formula. Gamers can now create and save up to 28 players, customizing each created player's name, number, position, weight, awareness, range, injury resistance, and speed. Customization is also a factor in schedules as players can now select the schools they want to play against (there are 111 Division 1A teams). Armchair athletes can even play all their games at home, if they so choose. A few new animations have been added, along

with a Tie Breaker mode, in which the coin toss winner automatically starts on the 25 yard line. If that team fails to get a first down, the other squad gets the ball at the same field position until either team scores. The stakes are high, and players can compete in the Nokia Sugar Bowl, the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, the FedEx Orange Bowl, or the Rose Bowl. In addition to bowl and university licensing, the game features a USA Today/CNN Coach's Poll and a Sears National Championship. Also released for the SNES.

College Football's National Championship

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

In this game, 32 of the best college teams in the country try to win the National Championship Tournament. Real team logos, colors, fight songs, and college playbooks (including wishbone and option offenses) give the game authenticity, as do two-point conversions, weather conditions (fair, rain, snow), stadium types (grass, artificial turf, domed), and play-by-play commentary (by Lon Simmons, who voiced the *Sports Talk* series). Music, speech, referees, and penalties can be turned on or off, and tournaments can consist of 4, 8, 16, or 32 teams. Other features include: double slants, Hail Marys, 360° spin jukes, a record book for saving personal bests (via battery backup), three difficulty levels, three different game times (20, 40, or 60 minutes), and a Race for #1 mode that lets players customize their own 12-week season. The $\frac{3}{4}$ view of the large, scrolling playfield is from overhead, and the action moves vertically. Six-button controller recommended.

College Football's National Championship II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Like the original game, *College Football's National Championship II* uses the same game engine as *NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Mon-*

tana. Once again, 32 schools compete for the National Championship, but San Diego State, Pitt, LSU, Arkansas, and Houston have been replaced by Wisconsin, North Carolina, Colorado State, Oregon, and Washington State. The record book now keeps track of 19 (as opposed to 16) categories, and the scratchy voice effects of announcer Lon Simmons are a thing of the past. Otherwise, the action is largely the same, meaning players get a solid game of grid-iron goodness. Six-button controller recommended.

College Slam

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Iguana. Sports/Basketball, 1–16 players (4-player simultaneous). 1996.

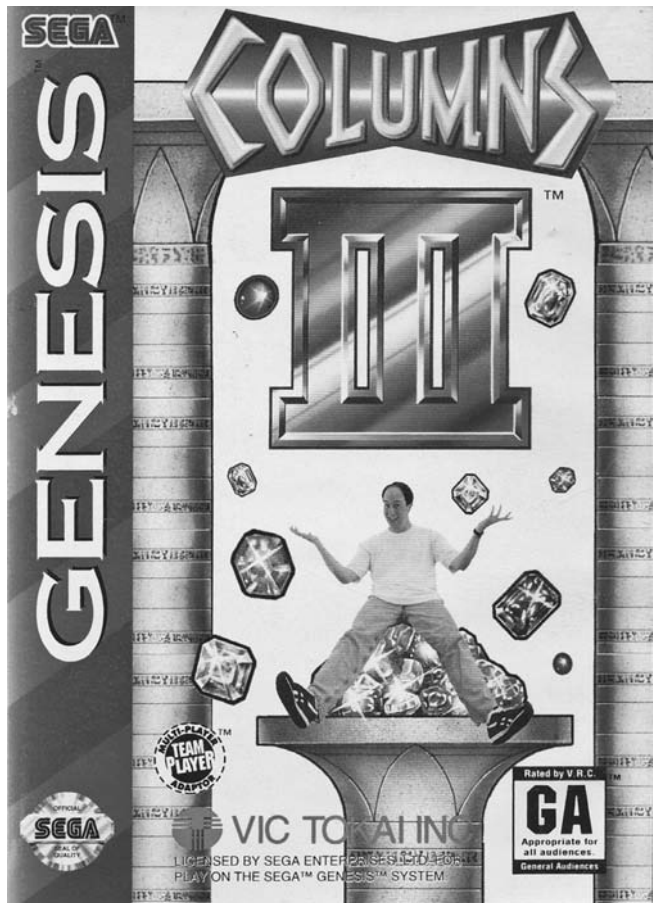
Although overly similar to the two-on-two, arcade-style action of the *NBA Jam* series (*NBA Jam T.E.* in particular), *College Slam* does offer some new power-ups, including: “R” (reverses direction of ball); “Z” (zaps hoop with lighting to prevent other team from scoring); “I” (invisibility); “C” (causes ball to bounce chaotically off the floor); and “W” (turns player into a whirlwind). The game features 44 college teams, with players rated in nine categories. Modes of play include Head to Head, Semi Finals, Tournament, and Season. Includes cheerleaders and detailed crowds. Also released for the Game Boy, SNES, PSX, and Saturn.

Columns

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

An excellent port of Sega’s 1990 arcade game, *Columns* borrows elements of play from *Tetris*, but replaces the falling blocks with falling jewels. The color-coded stones drop down the playfield three at a time in single horizon-

tal columns. Players can maneuver the jewels within the horizontal columns as they fall in order to reposition each jewel. When three or more jewels of the same color form a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal line, they disappear from the screen. Expert (and lucky) players can pull off chains and combos, which was considered cutting edge at the time. If the stack of jewels reaches the top of the playfield, the game will end. In two-player split-screen mode, players simply try to survive the longest. Unlike *Puyo Pop* (which is also color based) or *Tetris*, the shapes in *Columns* cannot be rotated, making for a shorter, less strategy intensive game. Still, it’s a lot of fun and will please most action puzzle fans. Also released for the Game Gear and Master System, the latter version of which includes other types of shapes (in addi-



Columns III adds five-player action and other features to the *Columns* formula, which was inspired by *Tetris*.

tion to jewels). *Columns II: The Voyage Through Time* (arcade) was only released in Japan.

Columns III: Revenge of Columns

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Minato Giken. Action Puzzle, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Columns III employs the same basic game-play mechanic as *Columns*, but adds a number of new features. The endless one-player game is gone, replaced by competition against the computer (or against up to four opponents). Attacking the other player — something that wasn't a part of the original *Columns* — is done by using magic stones to dump rows on their playfield. Magic stones can also eliminate rows in your playfield and get rid of all the jewels in your playfield of the color it lands on. In addition, eliminating four lines of jewels at once produces a flashing stone, which, when extinguished, plays havoc with your opponent, such as screwing with their controls, reversing their screen, or turning their jewels black and white. Further, super flashing stones produce such effects as clearing all your jewels or speeding up your opponent's jewels. As if that weren't enough, there are special items to collect for continuing, counteracting poison, and more. In many ways a nice upgrade, *Columns III* is certainly more complex than *Columns*, but certain fans of the series will miss the simplicity of the original. Released the same year as *Stack Columns* (arcade). Followed by: *Super Columns* (GG) and *Columns Crown* (GBA).

Combat Cars

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Viewed from an overhead perspective, *Combat Cars* offers eight different vehicles, each outfitted with unique weaponry: glue, oil, mines, shotgun, smoke, hydro boosts (two different types), or heat-seeking missiles, the latter of which make that car much more powerful than the others. Placing in the top three wins money for weapon, performance, and tire upgrades, but failure to do so will end the game, causing some frustration for less skilled drivers. Twenty-four tracks provide a nice

variety of city streets, country roads, mountain trails, and other environments. Similar to *Micro Machines* (NES) and *Moto Rader* (TG-16).

Comix Zone

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1995.

Comix Zone is a highly original game in which artist Sketch Turner is zapped into a comic book he is working on. The pony tailed hero finds himself in a gorgeously illustrated world where he must use a variety of punches, kicks, and weapons (knives, bombs, and a pet sewer rat named Road Kill) to fight off androids, assassins, mutants, and other bad guys. The most vile of the bunch is super-villain Mortus (represented by a giant hand holding a pencil), who draws enemies on the spot for Sketch to fight. *Comix Zone's Streets of Rage*-style beat-'em-up action is fairly standard for the genre, but its amazing visuals, fantastic sounds, branching pathways, and unique way of generating enemies make it stand out from the pack.

Contra: Hard Corps

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Contra III: The Alien Wars* (SNES), *Contra: Hard Corps* treads on familiar ground, offering the same type of fast, furious, shoot-'em-up action that the *Contra* franchise is famous for. This time, however, players can select from four running, jumping, sliding, climbing (on walls and ceilings), shooting characters: Ray Poward (a square-jawed stud); Sheena Etranzi (a beautiful blonde); Brad Fang (werewolf-type cyborg); and Brownny (a combat robot). Each character wields a rapid-fire machine gun and collects grenades, but special weapons, which can be picked up and held in inventory, are unique to each hero. These include an ax laser, a beast shooter, a flame thrower, an electromagnetic yo-yo, spread fire (the most popular weapon from the original *Contra*), and more. Stages include City Battle, High Speed Flight (ride atop a motorcycle),

Jungle, Air Combat (ride atop a flying vehicle), Sea Struggle, and Alien Space. There are hidden stages as well, and players can select different pathways for different endings. *Contra: Hard Corps* boasts excellent (if difficult) gameplay and killer visual effects, including a huge cyclopean mid-boss who begins in the background behind burning buildings and leaps to the forefront of the action. Followed by: *Contra: Legacy of War* (PSX, Saturn), *Neo Contra* (PS2), *Contra 4* (DS), and other sequels.

Cool Spot

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: The Global Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

A stylish, nicely animated platformer with colorful, richly detailed graphics, *Cool Spot* stars the round, shades-wearing 7Up mascot, who can run, jump (some of the platform jumping is very tricky), climb, flip, turn somersaults, float on balloons, ride in bubbles, and throw Cool Shot bubbles (at dragonflies, robots, dive-bombing bees, cheese-throwing mice, and other enemies). Cool Spot's job is to collect cool points (red spinning discs) and 7Up, and to rescue his friends. The game takes players through 11 wild and wacky (the manual calls them "cool and crazy") levels, including Pier Pressure, Toying Around, Loco Motive, and Surf Patrol, each filled with fun and variety. In addition, there are bonus levels that take place inside a 7Up bottle. Tunes by famed game music composer Tommy Tallarico only add to the enjoyment. Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, and Game Gear. Followed by: *Spot Goes to Hollywood* (Genesis, PSX, Saturn). The character also appeared in *Spot: The Video Game!* (NES, GB) and *Spot: The Cool Adventure* (GB).

Cosmic Spacehead

Publisher: Codemasters. Developer: Supersonic Software. Third-Person Graphic Adventure/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The sequel to *Linus Spacehead*, which appeared on the multi-title *Quattro Adventure* for the NES, *Cosmic Spacehead* finds the titular

alien trying to get back to Earth. During his quest, which is part platformer and part point-and-click adventure (commands include look, pick up, talk, give, and use), the alien teleports, gathers candy, competes in a bumper car race, plays a slot machine, avoids enemies, freezes a pool in order to cross it, climbs on vines, finds and uses keys, destroys a wall with a missile, and much more. The game was released as *Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade* for the NES; the Genesis version has more stylish visuals and a two-player mode called Pie Slap, which is similar to *Armor Ambush* for the Atari 2600. Unlicensed.

Crack Down

Publisher: Sage's Creation. Developer: Hot-B. Overhead View Action/Maze Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Despite such concessions as a crude looking map and downgraded sounds, *Crack Down* is an excellent port of Sega's 1989 arcade game. The top-down action has players guiding Special Forces Officers Ben (player one) and Andy (player two) around a futuristic Federal mission, avoiding obstacles, placing bombs on all the specially marked areas, and then exiting the level within a set time limit. The action is pleasingly simplistic (yet challenging) as the map shows where the bombs should be placed and the locations of the exits. There are plenty of enemies to annihilate (with a machine gun, a cannon, and super bombs), including Mad-Murderers, Mandrills, and Crash Soldiers, but enemy avoidance is a key to success, adding strategic (and even stealth-like) elements to an action-oriented game. The screen is split into two windows (plus the map), making for a small playfield. When a second gamer is not on hand to help complete the mission, the second window identifies enemies by appearance, weapon, and name (in the arcade version, the second window says "insert coin"). *Crack Down* offers old-school excitement, especially when two players are involved.

CrossFire

Publisher: Kyugo Trading. Developer: A.I. Company. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

One of the more obscure games in the Genesis library, *CrossFire* puts players in the role of a mercenary hired to rescue POWs in various Central American countries. Gameplay is a cross (pun intended) of sorts between *Tiger-Heli* and *Commando*, with players piloting a helicopter up the screen, shooting everything in sight, and then going at it on foot, blowing away enemies. There are also portions of the game in which the helicopter — still moving up the screen — is viewed in close-up. Completing missions lets players purchase weaponry, including super powerful lasers. During the foot soldier scenes, players can jump in order to shoot gun turrets that are otherwise out of reach, which is an unusual feature for this type of game. In addition, there's a special weapon that summons the chopper while the soldier ducks down out of harm's way. Graphically, *CrossFire* is average, but the rapid-fire action is quickly paced and challenging — a combo sure to please hardcore shooter fans. Loosely based on the television series *Airwolf*, which ran from 1984 to 1987 (the Japanese version of the game is called *Super Airwolf*).

Crüe Ball: Heavy Metal Pinball

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: NuFX. Pinball, 1-4 players (alternating). 1992.

Populated by such free floating targets as Head Maggot, Beethoven Dude, and Cerebral Cyclops, *Crüe Ball* is hardly conventional pinball (despite the appearance of bumpers, spinners, bonus multipliers, and other traditional trappings), but it is a lot of fun, especially for fans of the rock band Motley Crüe. Each of the game's nine vertically scrolling levels of play is similar in design, but solid gameplay mechanics (smooth scrolling, nice ball

movement, etc.) make this easy to overlook. Crüe faithfuls will recognize instrumental versions of three of the band's signature songs: "Live Wire," "Dr. Feel Good," and "Home Sweet Home."

Crusader of Centy

Publisher: Atlus. Developer: Nextech. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1994.

Crusader of Centy is similar to *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*, but it sets itself apart by giving the hero the ability to communicate with animals and use their abilities. For example, the cheetah makes the player run faster while the penguin gives the sword a



Crüe Ball is a pinball title featuring video game renditions of Motley Crüe hits "Live Wire," "Dr. Feel Good," and "Home Sweet Home."

freezing attack. Animal powers must be combined (two at a time) at certain points, giving the game some strategy. In addition to battling monsters, players must solve puzzles (by pushing blocks), avoid obstacles, and collect money to purchase items. *Centy* is fun, but *Zelda* is longer, has more secrets, and is more challenging.

Crystal's Pony Tale

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Artech Studios. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1994.

Crystal's pony friends have been turned into magic jewels by an evil witch. To free the friends, players guide the pink and purple (or other hue, depending on the colors chosen) pony through seven colorful, nicely illustrated levels (including flowery fields, a farm, underground caverns, and dark forests), running, jumping, and searching for the jewels. Each level has puzzles to solve, requiring Crystal to converse with various animals and plants (who communicate via pictures in thought bubbles). For example, when encountering the rabbit that has carrots on his mind, Crystal should bring the rabbit a carrot from the carrot patch. There are bees and other enemies to dodge, but Crystal cannot die. Also, jumping is automatic. Keys open chests while collecting five horseshoes is required for exiting a level. A Sega Club title, *Crystal's Pony Tale* is a nonlinear puzzler recommended (on the box) for children ages four to seven. However, the youngest players may have trouble figuring how to puzzle their way through the levels.

Cutthroat Island

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Based on the 1995 box office bomb, which starred Mathew Modine and Geena Davis, *Cutthroat Island* lets gamers play as either sword-wielding William Shaw or rapier-toting Morgan Adams. On a quest to uncover a treasure trove of priceless gems and gold bullion, players battle their way through 10 levels (including dark caves, a jungle, rocky cliffs, and a tavern), hack-

ing, slashing, jabbing, and punching such enemies as redcoats, harbor masters, jungle creatures, rogues, and, of course, pirates. Prior to getting started, a selection screen lets players choose Swordplay mode or Brawling mode, the latter of which pointlessly (so to speak) disallows players the use of the sword's blade (the butt is employed to punch enemies). As the game progresses, players acquire new weapons (bombs, pistols, hammers, and the like) and special moves. Giving the game some variety are a runaway horse-drawn carriage level and a quarry cart stage, the latter of which has players fleeing prison guards. Includes two-player cooperative action. The game is fairly enjoyable, but regrettably short. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES.

Cyberball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Futuristic, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

When compared to the original arcade game (Atari, 1988), which was a mammoth machine boasting four-player action and two monitors, *Cyberball* for the Genesis has less detailed robot players, but offers a much larger selection of plays. The game is overhead-view, vertically scrolling, seven-on-seven football of the future (2022, to be exact). Penalties and field goals have been removed, and the ball is a 350-pound bomb that will explode if the player fails to get a touchdown or cross the 50-yard line within four downs. There are 28 selectable teams (as opposed to four in the NES version), games last six periods, and success earns players money to buy replacement robots. Released the year after *Cyberball 2072* (arcade) and *Tournament Cyberball 2072* (arcade). Followed by: *Tournament Cyberball* (Lynx).

Cyber-Cop

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Core Design. First-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

A port of the computer game *Corporation* (1990), which was a first-person shooter that predated *Wolfenstein 3D* by two years, *Cyber-Cop* lets gamers play as one of six different characters (two males, two females, two an-

droids), each rated according to such statistics as ability to repair electronics, damage opponents, and carry items. As a Cyber Cop, the player's job is to crack the complex security system of the Universal Cybernetics Corporation (comprised of five top levels and eight sub-basements) and confiscate its ultimate weapon: a domestic robot with a massive defect — it kills people. Gameplay involves shooting robots, avoiding and shooting cameras, cutting power, picking locks on doors, avoiding sleep gas, using a jetpack to fly, and utilizing such tools as hologram projectors and infrared image intensifiers. The goal in each level is to locate a computer, raise your security card's access level, and proceed via elevator further down into corporate headquarters. Levels are blandly similar, meaning it's easy to get lost, but usage of a compass does help. *Cyber-Cop* is an ambitious title, mixing first-person gunplay with RPG elements, but ugly environments and a convoluted control scheme conspire to make it a game not worth playing.

Cyborg Justice

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Side-Scrolling Combat/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

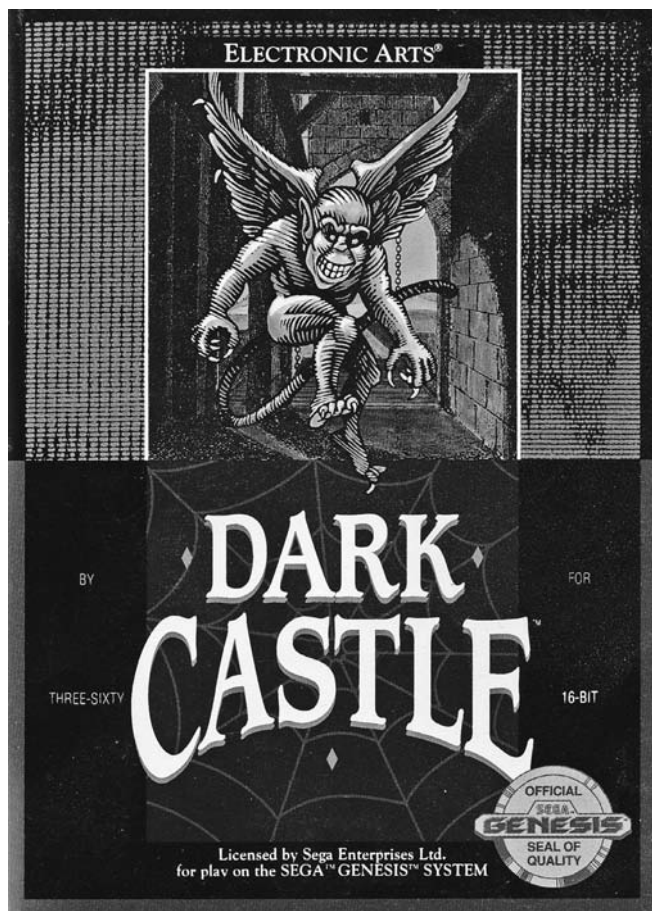
Cyborg Justice borrows from such superior titles as *Double Dragon* and *Streets of Rage*, but replaces street fighters with cyborgs. Before the dark, futuristic action (which consists of walking along linear pathways, battling a cyborg or two every few seconds) begins, players must construct a cyborg using six different types of hands (normal, crusher, saw, launch, laser, and fire spray), legs (jogging, spiked, somersault, tank, big foot, and pneumatic), and bodies (normal, lobster, insect, frog, big booster, and Quasimodo), for a total of 216 possible combinations. There are numerous

punches, kicks, jumps, smashes, and other moves (including the ability to rip off the enemy's arms and torso), but many of them are frustratingly hard to pull off, making for an ambitious (at least in terms of numbers), but disappointing and surprisingly monotonous game (lousy backgrounds and sound effects don't help). In two-player mode, a second gamer can join in for a little head-to-head fighting.

Dark Castle

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Three-Sixty Pacific. Adventure/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

One of the worst games in the Genesis library, *Dark Castle* puts players in the role of an



Adapted from the computer game of the same name, *Dark Castle* isn't nearly as cool as its theme would indicate.

ineffectual adventurer who wards off bats, rats, and other enemies by throwing rocks at them. Unfortunately, the hero's arm moves slowly, meaning he's often killed while setting his aim. He's also incompetent when it comes to climbing stairs, jumping over gaps, and swinging on ropes. There are three quests to complete — Guaranteed Trouble, Fireball Warehouse, and Maze to the Shield — but few gamers will stick with this shoddy looking, poor playing game long enough to finish even one of them. Also released for the Philips CD-i.

Dashin' Desperadoes

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Character Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Featuring a horizontal split screen perspective, *Dashin' Desperadoes* is an unusual and entertaining racing game that pits cowboys Will and Rick against one another to win a cowgirl's affection. The objective is to be the first to reach the end of each of 18 stages spread across six different worlds: Town, Wilderness, Ocean, Jungle, Iceberg, and Ruins. To gain an advantage, players can find shortcuts, pick up speed boosts, turn invisible to the other player, and grab bombs (including fire, thunder, freeze, and barbell) for throwing at the other racer. Special bombs are used to defeat car, blimp, and airplane bosses. Obstacles to jump over along the raceways include boulders, sharks, snowmen, porcupines, and more. To unlock mini-games, the manual suggests entering the following passwords: ROCK FALL (dodge rocks), UFO (jump on clouds), MINE-A (fly UFO, shoot other player, steer clear of mines), and MINE-B (avoid homing mines).

David Crane's Amazing Tennis

Publisher: Absolute Entertainment. Developer: FarSight Technologies. Sports/Tennis, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Designed by David Crane, the mastermind behind *Pitfall!* (Atari 2600), *Amazing Tennis* features an unusually low perspective, with gamers viewing the action from behind their player, which can be somewhat visually

obstructive when the player in question is on the far side of the court. The game looks fantastic, utilizing "22 different planes of depth" and "motion-picture-quality animation." Doubles is not an option, and gamers can't create their own player. However, handedness and player name are customizable. The game offers three court surfaces (hard, grass, and clay), 15 computer opponents, a radar gun to gauge serve speeds, animated line judges, slow motion instant replays, and the voice of renowned chair umpire Frank Hammond. Unfortunately, tournament progress cannot be saved since the game lacks passwords and battery backup. Luckily, good controls, an interesting view, and a variety of shots (lobs, slices, smashes, volleys, droop shots, and topspin) make it a game worth owning. Also released for the SNES.

David Robinson's Supreme Court

Publisher: Sega. Developer: ACME Interactive. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Featuring halftime and post-game commentary by David "The Admiral" Robinson (of San Antonio Spurs fame), *Supreme Court* is Sega's follow-up to *Pat Riley Basketball*. The view of the court is from a $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective (a departure from *Pat Riley* and most other b-ball titles), with the screen flipping when the player crosses the half-court line. This can be disorienting, but players are given the option to have the screen fade out at these times, which is less abrupt but still annoying. Game features include: five fictional teams; 24 different shot types; three difficulty levels; substitutions; fouls and other violations; three-on-three and five-on-five action; adjustable quarter lengths; and three modes of play: Exhibition, Tournament, and Role-Play. Tournament winners get to take a crack at Robinson's All-Star squad. Gamers can select their team from a cast of 20 players, each of whom is rated according to scoring, blocking, rebounding, and steals. Despite the game's title, Robinson is not a playable character.

Davis Cup Tennis

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Loriciel. Sports/Tennis, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Despite the inclusion of three difficulty levels, *Davis Cup Tennis* is terribly hard to beat. It works pretty well in two-player mode, however, with a split-screen perspective giving both gamers a view of their player from behind (an unusual feature for a Genesis sports title). The game offers four court surfaces (clay, grass, indoor, and hard) and five modes of play: Davis Cup, Exhibition, Championship, Tournament, and Training, the latter of which is well-intentioned, but inadequate in honing most players' skills enough to beat the computer. There are 32 international players (all male, all fictional) from which to choose, each ranked according to ability. Singles and doubles are available, and gamers can play one, three, or five sets. The game, which is compatible with the six-button controller (six different racquet swings are available) and has very nice graphics, includes instant replays, a ball boy, voice effects, and contestable calls. Also released for the GBA and TurboGrafx-16.

Deadly Moves

Publisher: Kaneko. Developer: System Vision. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

One of the lesser *Street Fighter II* clones, *Deadly Moves* only lets players fight as a single character (an American named Joe) in one-player mode. The objective is to defeat a series of opponents in a series of one-on-one battles, using a small variety of punches and kicks. Players can also jump, throw, and block. After a win, the player's fighter gets their stats raised and a password becomes available, the latter of which is an unusual feature for a fighter. The password feature is useful since the opponents are quick and tough to beat. In two-player mode, all of the seven martial artists are controllable. Each fighter has two special moves, ranging from hair whip to blade toss to spinning lariat. Unlike *Street Fighter II*, the fighters can move up and down (as opposed to just right and left), making it harder to be on the correct plane to connect hits. Players can select the backgrounds, but dull graphics make this less interesting than it should be. Released for the SNES as *Power Moves*.

The Death and Return of Superman

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Blizzard Entertainment/Sunsoft. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1994.

Based on DC Comics' popular *The Death of Superman* and *The Reign of the Supermen* comic book crossover series, this game finds Doomsday destroying Metropolis and fighting Superman to the death. Depending on the level being played, gamers will control Superman or one of the four pretenders to the throne: Eradicator, The Cyborg, Superboy, or Steel. Each character has a special weapon (such as heat vision or energy blasts) and a special attack (such as hover blasts or bombs), but most of the time is spent punching or jump-kicking the chain-saw-wielding thugs, dynamite-throwing bad guys, and other enemies. Gameplay evokes *Final Fight* and *Streets of Rage*, but with more redundant attacks and enemies. The Supermen can fly during standard levels and during a few side-scrolling shooter stages (which are ridiculously easy), but walking is the more frequent mode of getting through most areas. *The Death and Return of Superman* is one of the better looking and playing Superman games for any system, which admittedly isn't saying much, but it is fun. There are 10 levels of play — you'll use lots of continues to see them all. Also released for the SNES.

Death Duel

Publisher: RazorSoft. Developer: Punk Development. First-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

In *Death Duel*, players move a targeting cursor around the screen, firing missiles, lasers, machine gun bullets, mines, grenades, homing rockets, and other weapons at a series of huge, boss-like alien monsters and robots (who sometimes hide behind brick walls). The action scrolls horizontally, and players can purchase extra ammo from Dr. Thrag's Weapons Shop, which sometimes runs sales (the player must decide if he or she is actually getting a bargain). The action is violent, and there's plenty of strategy involved as gamers must conserve ammo, aim for target areas, and determine which weapons are effective against which enemies. Amusingly, a scantily clad girl frequently

appears, shaking her hips and dishing out such text-based advice as “Turn him into maggot fodder!” and “Kick his asteroids!” *Death Duel* is difficult, but skilled gamers with a taste for blood and dismemberment will have a good time.

Decapattack

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Vic Tokai. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Decapattack stars Chuck D. Head, a mummy/Frankenstein-type creature who can throw his skull at the ghosts, werewolves, man-eating plants, and other cartoonish monsters that he encounters. In addition, Chuck has a head in his stomach that is used for punching. Despite the quirky lead character, *Decapattack* offers fairly standard platforming action, with the typical running, jumping (across gaps and on enemies), and swimming. Grabbing potions enables Chuck to run faster, jump higher, punch harder, freeze monsters, and more. Finding a treasure and defeating a boss are requirements for beating each level.

Demolition Man

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1995.

Based on the 1993 feature film, *Demolition Man* puts players in the Sylvester Stallone role of Spartan, trying to capture Simon Phoenix (who was played by Wesley Snipes). The game consists of 10 levels: five platform (à la *Contra*) and five top-down (à la *Smash T.V.*). The game moves at a rapid clip, with Spartan running, jumping, climbing, swinging hand over hand, and shooting (with a pistol, a shotgun, and a magnum) his way through the futuristic utopia of San Angeles. Spartan can also use such items as hand grenades, flare grenades, infrared goggles, armor, medi-packs, and freeze vials. There are lots of enemies to kill, but players should avoid harming innocents. The action gets very busy at times (creating some slowdown), and certain parts are tough to get through, but hardy shooter fans will stick with *Demolition Man* till the satisfying conclusion. Nicely detailed graphics, cool sound effects (in-

cluding voices), and a terrific score by Tommy Tallarico are icing on the cake. The Sega CD version is similar, but adds digitized film footage. Also released for the SNES. Much different than the 3DO version, which has driving, fighting, and first-person levels.

Desert Demolition Starring Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

Desert Demolition is essentially a playable Looney Tunes cartoon, with gamers guiding either Road Runner or Wile E. Coyote. Each character handles uniquely and has somewhat different goals. As Road Runner, players run away from Wile E. Coyote, peck bird seed to restore health, and force Wile E. bump into a wall or scare him to make him drop his stamps. As the famous coyote, players try to catch up with and grab Road Runner, eat jars of vitamins to restore health, and jump inside Acme boxes to spring contraptions (such as rockets and spring shoes). Both characters run, jump, climb, collect stamps to get to bonus rounds, collect turbo speed boosts, collect clocks for extra time, bounce on trampolines, jump into cannons and catapults to go super high, and try to reach the end of each level before time runs out. An unusual game that veers skillfully and fittingly away from the typical platformer formula, *Desert Demolition* consists of six beautifully animated and illustrated (if fairly short) levels: Red Rock Rendezvous, Buttes and Ladders, Choo Choo Terrain, Karl's Bad Caverns, Granite Gulch, and Acme Factory.

Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

The first game in the popular *Strike* series, *Desert Strike*, which takes place shortly after the Gulf War, puts players at the helm of an Apache helicopter, using a chain gun, hydras, and hellfire to destroy guards, soldiers, tanks, airfields, jails, power stations, scud launchers, and other enemies and enemy installations. Grabbing armor, fuel, and ammunition is essential in

surviving the 27 missions, which include freeing prisoners, escorting a bus, protecting oil fields, and more. Checking the computer battle maps and satellite data is important as well. Also released for the Game Gear, Game Boy, Lynx, and SNES. Followed by: *Jungle Strike*.

Devilish: The Next Possession

Publisher: Sage's Creation. Developer: Aisystem Tokyo. Ball-and-Paddle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

At its core, *Devilish: The Next Possession* is similar to *Breakout* (rebound a ball off paddles to destroy bricks), but it expands upon the concept (with mixed results) by adding scrolling playfields, a variety of moving and static targets (including skeletons, tombstones, tree creatures, demons, and bosses), strict time limits, locked gates, item-emitting treasure chests, and an adventurous, graphically rich horror environment. In addition, there's a top paddle that can move vertically or be positioned parallel or perpendicular to the bottom paddle. *Devilish: The Next Possession* is the follow-up to *Devilish* (Game Gear), which was released the previous year.

Dick Tracy

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Based on the 1990 film starring Warren Beatty (which was based on the Chester Gould comic strip), *Dick Tracy* is a mystery-deprived shooting game in which the titular detective must battle crime boss Big Boy Caprice and his goons: Itchy, The Brow, Lips Manlis, Pruneface, and Flattop. Gameplay, which is slow and straightforward, consists of moving from left to right, shooting or punching bad guys and jumping over obstacles. There are no items to gather, but the game does offer an unusual twist: enemy attacks from the background, which are thwarted by aiming a cursor and firing. In addition, bonus rounds let players shoot at pop-up targets. Also released for the Master System. Much different than the Game Boy and NES versions.

Dick Vitale's "Awesome, Baby!"

College Hoops

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Famed college basketball color commentator "Dicky V" gets his shot at 16-bit immortality with *Dick Vitale's "Awesome, Baby!" College Hoops*, which features an unusual (but not unprecedented) 3D rotating court, giving players a "true view" look at the five-on-five action. The game is not authorized by the NCAA, meaning teams are represented by state names. However, team names can be customized. Other options include game speed, fouls turned on or off, and three modes of play: Practice, Tournament, and two-on-two Slam Dunk Competition. Features include tip-offs, three-pointers, goaltending, timeouts, overtime, backcourt violations, player fatigue, a shot clock, a shot summary screen, the ability to call offensive and defensive plays, and surprisingly sparse commentary by Vitale. Regrettably, poor animation and slow gameplay make for a less-than-awesome cartridge. For a much better hoops title with a similar camera system, try the Mode 7-enhanced *NCAA Basketball* for the SNES.

Dino Land

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Pinball, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

Dino Land takes place more than one hundred million years ago (between the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods), when a hero named Dino-Bunz would roll into a ball, bump into other dinosaurs, and save his girl, Meeshell (yes, this is a pinball game with a storyline). Most of the action takes place on land as players use two pairs of flippers to keep the balled-up dinosaur in play on a vertically scrolling table, aiming for such targets as dinosaurs (stationary and moving), bumpers, holes, and a slot machine. From time to time, based on completing various table objectives, the action will switch to the sky or the bottom of the ocean, but this is hard to do and requires some luck (such as the aforementioned slot machine). Shooting

the ball into a particular hole several times initiates a boss round in which players must hit the dinosaur ball at a boss while at the same time unraveling the dino-ball into a dinosaur and running into an evil dinosaur to keep it away from Meeshell. This is a cute, semi-playable game with unlimited continues, limited objectives, and a woefully inadequate instruction manual. Also, the land table gets old after extended play.

Dinosaurs for Hire

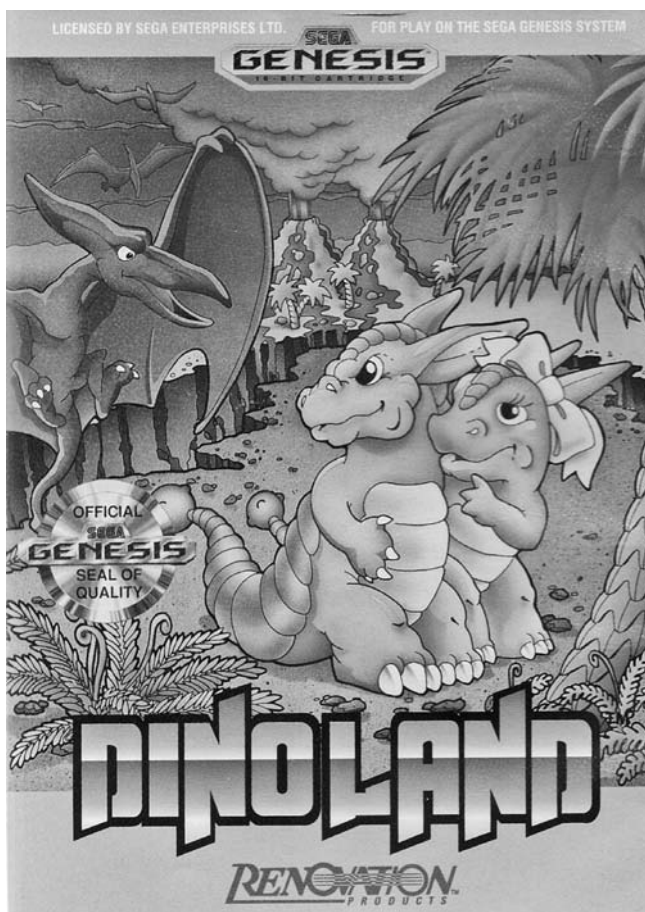
Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Based on Tom Mason's humorous comic book series, *Dinosaurs for Hire* lets players control one of three different gun-totin', coffee-drinkin' dinos: Reese, Lorenzo, or Archie. In addition to shooting, each dinosaur has a close-up attack (pistol whip, head butt, or tail sweep) and can power-up with triple shots, invincibility, and smart bombs. Ninjas, bikers, skateboarders, and other standard enemies are fairly routine, but the bosses look fantastic and are fun to fight. The game takes place through 18 stages (spread over five levels), including Tenement, Empire State Building, The Cavern, Under Hoover Dam, Jet Ski Adventure, Blue Line Train, Toy Factory, and Somewhere in Japan.

A Dinosaur's Tale

Publisher: Hi-Tech Expressions. Developer: Funcom Productions. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the animated feature, *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story* (1993), *A Dinosaur's Tale* lets players guide Louie or Cecilia on a mission to rescue dinosaur pals Dweeb, Elsa, Rex, and Woog from the diabolical Dr. Screw-



Dino Land is a cartoonish pinball game set between the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods.

eyes. Louie and Cecilia both perform such commonplace platforming feats as running to the right, jumping on platforms (including balloons that go up and down), and dodging falling objects. Louie and Cecilia also jump on enemies, which turns said enemies into bubbles that can be collected and used as money to purchase such power-ups as sneakers (for running faster and jumping higher), bubble shields, and boomerangs. In addition, players will fly Elsa through Central Park, maneuver Rex on a skateboard through the streets of New York, and guide Woog on a wild scooter ride. These fun, between-level stages are viewed from behind the dinosaur. *A Dinosaur's Tale* is colorful and even cartoon-like, but the difficulty level may be too steep for younger

players. *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story* was also adapted for the Game Boy and SNES (both under the actual movie title), but those games are much different than this one.

DJ Boy

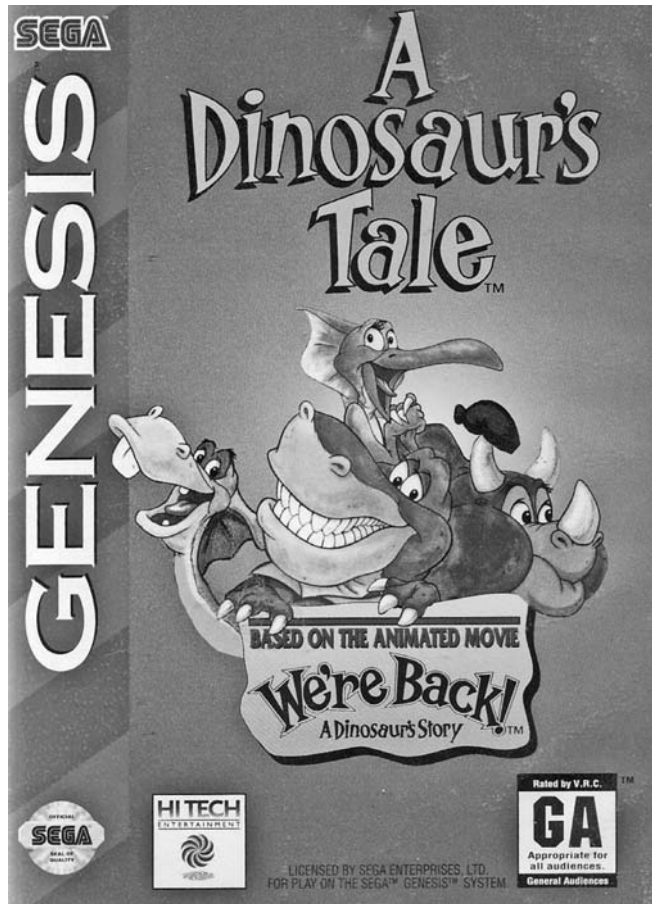
Publisher: Kaneko. Developer: Inter State. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

DJ Boy for the Genesis is based on the 1989 Kaneko arcade game, but certain elements are missing, including the first boss's fart attack (gross), various animations, and the two-player simultaneous mode. In addition, the storyline has been altered from a stolen boom box to the more stereotypical damsel in distress. The side-scrolling action is fairly conventional, even though the characters are on roller skates. As *DJ Boy*, players skate through six levels (including a subway and a construction site), punching, double punching, kicking, and double kicking skinheads, unicyclists, exploding clowns, and other enemies. In addition, there are obstacles to dodge and jump over, including dynamite, traffic cones, and oil slicks. Button-mashing works on enemies, but bosses require some degree of strategy. Certain defeated enemies release coins players can use to purchase items for increasing skating speed, attacking speed, attacking strength, and defense. Buying a cat grants players a much-needed extra life.

Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Compile. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A Sonic-sized take on Sega/Compile's *Puyo Puyo* arcade game (1992), *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* stars Sonic the Hedgehog's arch nemesis, who's rounding up denizens of Beanville and placing them into dungeons. As each pair of beans comes into the dungeon (i.e.



A Dinosaur's Tale is based on the 1993 animated film *We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story*.

falls from the sky), players must move and rotate them into rows or groupings of four or more of the same color to make them disappear. Creating chain reactions dumps refugee beans into the other gamer's playfield. The objective in this thoroughly playable puzzler is to keep the beans from piling to the top. Also released for the Game Gear. Similar to: *Dr. Mario* (NES) and *Kirby's Avalanche* (SNES).

Doom Troopers: Mutant Chronicles

Publisher: Playmates Interactive Entertainment. Developer: Adrenalin Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

One of the gorier games of the 16-bit era, *Doom Troopers* puts players in the role of either Mitch Hunter (outfitted with a huge

laser blaster) or Max Steiner (equipped with dual machine pistols), each of whom runs, jumps (over gaps and onto platforms), and shoots his way through eight galactic levels, ridding human outposts of mutated hordes of Dark Legion Necromutants. The dark, interplanetary sci-fi action moves at a fast pace as players gun down aliens, disabling, disfiguring, and dismembering them in the process (blood does indeed flow freely). In addition to standard issue firearms, gamers can wield such special weaponry as grenades and flamethrowers, the latter dishing out especially grizzly justice (with sound effects to match). There's more than simple run-and-gun violence on display, however, as players must also dodge landmines, battle bosses, avoid falling icicles, figure out how to cross water without access to boats or bridges, and more. *Midnight Resistance* fans wanting something with more visceral appeal should give *Doom Troopers* a shot. Also released for the SNES.

Double Dragon

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Harder to find and graphically superior to its NES and SMS counterparts, *Double Dragon* for the Genesis is based on Taito's 1987 coin-op classic. Despite dodgy controls and faster action, the game is a reasonably well made port. Street toughs Billy and/or Jimmy Lee must walk, jump, punch, kick, elbow, and head-butt their way through five short levels (including a cave, a forest, and warehouse), with the goal of rescuing Marion. Picking up dynamite, whips, knives, barrels, baseball bats, boxes, and boulders helps in battling the bad guys, as does inviting a second gamer in for some two-player action. Also released for the Neo Geo, Atari 7800, Atari Lynx, and other systems.

Double Dragon 3: The Arcade Game

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A nice, graphically impressive port of the disappointing *Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta*

Stone (Technos, 1990), *Double Dragon 3: The Arcade Game*, like its coin-op cousin, alters the *Double Dragon* formula in a number of largely unfavorable ways, including the additions of exotic environments (Italy, Egypt, China, and Japan), a dash attack, and new playable characters. Extra lives and certain fighting moves (such as hurricane kicks) must be purchased, which is annoying, but at least Genesis owners don't have to use real coins. The previous game in the series, *Double Dragon II: The Revenge*, was released for the NES and the Mega Drive, but not the Genesis.

Double Dragon V: The Shadow Falls

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Leland Interactive Media. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Unlike previous games in the series, which were side-scrolling beat-'em-ups, *Double Dragon V* is a one-on-one fighter in the tradition of *Street Fighter II* (but nowhere near as good). Billy and Jimmy Lee are playable characters, as are 10 different Shadow Warriors, including Shadow Master, Jawbreaker, and Dominique. Each character is equipped with four to six special moves, along with a sword, a laser rifle, rocket blasters, or other weapon. Also released for the SNES and Jaguar, *The Shadow Falls* is based on the *Double Dragon* cartoon. *Super Double Dragon*, a Super NES exclusive, was the fourth game in the series. Followed by: *Double Dragon Advance* (GBA).

Double Dribble: The Playoff Edition

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Sports/Basketball, 1–8 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A sequel to the highly enjoyable NES hoops title *Double Dribble*, *Double Dribble: The Playoff Edition* offers lots of new features, including substitutions, 16 different teams (each containing 12 players), larger player graphics, more elaborate dunks, three game modes (Playoff, Exhibition, and Multi-Play), a password feature for saving progress, and player ratings in seven categories: shooting, jumping, stealing, speed, height, power (shoving ability), and strength. Up to eight gamers can play at once, and the view, though still from the side,

is higher up and shows the action at more of an angle. Unfortunately, the close-up dunk animations from *Double Dribble* are gone, the five-on-five gameplay is disappointingly slow (especially for an arcade-style game), and the screen flickers to the point of distraction. The original *Double Dribble* was released in the arcades in 1986, spawning ports for the NES (as mentioned above) and Game Boy. *The Playoff Edition* is a Genesis exclusive.

Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Fighting, 1–3 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Inspired by the 1993 biographical film, which starred Jason Scott Lee, *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* puts players in the role of the martial arts legend (unfortunately, there are no other fighters to select from). Armed with nunchuku and more than 35 different fighting moves, Lee must pummel his way through a series of fights against a variety of foes (sometimes two at once), including a kickboxer, a chain-wielding sailor, a chef bearing two meat cleavers, a female acrobat with a staff, and a phantom samurai. Defeating a certain number of enemies builds up Lee's Chi, giving him special abilities and weapons. There are three different fighting styles: Mantis, Fighter, and Nunchuku. The fighting action is prosaic (not to mention derivative), but for a couple of things: Story mode lets players punch and kick through key scenes from the movie; and Sega Team Player Adapter compatibility allows two players to compete or team up against the computer, or up to three players to duke it out at once. Also released for the Game Gear, SNES, and Jaguar.

Dragon's Fury

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Technosoft. Pinball, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

Dragon's Fury is a port of the great TurboGrafx pinball game, *Devil's Crush*. The Genesis game has a little more graphical detail than the Turbo original (though both games look fantastic, especially for pinball), along with extra bonus rounds, which are accessible by

performing specific table objectives. Also, *Dragon's Fury* adds an options screen featuring a sound test, controller configuration, and Tilt mode. Gameplay consists of using pairs of flippers to keep a ricocheting ball in play on an organic table so it will hit such creepy targets as aliens, dragon heads, skeletons, and wizards. The main table is three screens in height, with the action scrolling up and down to show the entire playfield. Fans of *Crüe Ball: Heavy Metal Pinball* will absolutely love this game. See also: *Alien Crush* (TG-16).

Dragon's Revenge

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Pinball, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

The sequel to *Dragon's Fury*, *Dragon's Revenge* features similar (if faster) pinball action on a colorfully, creepily detailed table that scrolls up and down to show the entire playfield, which is three screens in height. However, now the action scrolls a bit to the right and left since the table is larger horizontally (an unnecessary addition). Also, the boss-like bonus rounds stray from the horror/occult genre and instead feature fantasy-style art with barbarians, scantily clad women, and the like. Speaking of women, the female face on the table intermittently groans and moans as though writhing in the throes of passion, which is kind of odd. Overall, *Dragon's Revenge* isn't as finely polished as *Dragon's Fury*, but it is a fun game nevertheless.

The Duel: Test Drive II

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Distinctive Software. Sports Car Racing, 1 player. 1992.

The sequel to *Test Drive*, the 1987 computer game, *The Duel: Test Drive II* lets players select from a Porsche 959, a Ferrari F-40, and a Lamborghini, each capable of automatic or manual transmission (automatic is much easier to control). In addition, there are three types of racing courses: City, Mountain, and Desert, each identifiable by mediocre background scenery. The view of the racing action, which is barely more than the top half of the screen, is from the cockpit, and players can see the rear view mirror, dash board, steering

wheel, tachometer, trip meter, clock, gear shift, and radar detector, the latter of which indicates when you should slow down to the speed limit (or, you can try to outrun the state trooper). It is also important to stop and refuel at gas stations. *Test Drive II* runs at an agonizingly slow pace, races last way too long, the frame rate chugs along choppy, and the oncoming cars are hard to judge in relation to your car (which seems very wide). Players can race against the clock or a computer-controlled car. Also released for the SNES. Followed by numerous sequels.

Dune: The Battle for Arrakis

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.
Developer: Westwood Studios. Real-Time Strategy, 1 player. 1994.

The Genesis port of the 1992 PC game *Dune II: The Building of a Dynasty*, which practically invented the modern real-time strategy genre, *The Battle of Arrakis* has players selecting one of three houses (Atreides, Harkonnen, or Ordos), each of which struggles for control of a valuable spice. Gameplay consists of placing bricks to expand a base, constructing buildings on that base, harvesting spice, harnessing wind power, building refineries, making spice silos, attacking enemies, and much more. The Genesis version has fewer voice effects, but is enhanced with larger graphics and simpler interfacing. Clicking on items and directing them to their target locations works quite well. *Dune: The Battle for Arrakis* is loosely based on Frank Herbert's popular novel series, which began with the publication of *Dune* in 1965.

Dungeons & Dragons: Warriors of the Eternal Sun

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Westwood Associates. Third-Person/First-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1992.

In *Warriors of the Eternal Sun*, the evil Borrower has transported Duke Barrik's kingdom to a strange and dangerous land, and it's up to the player to set things right by exploring dungeons and battling monsters using upgradeable weaponry. Prior to the adventure, players can select a default four-character party

or, preferably, create their own. There are seven character classes, including elf, fighter, and magic user. Outdoor battles give players an overhead view of the action while dungeon-based skirmishes are strictly first-person (à la *Eye of the Beholder* for the Sega CD). Although relatively short and a tad easy, *D&D* fans should enjoy the game to some degree.

Dynamite Duke

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Hertz. Third-Person 3D Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

A port of Fabtek's 1989 arcade game, *Dynamite Duke* has players guiding a "one-man assault force" right and left along the bottom of the screen (which scrolls to the right), shooting at mutants, assault helicopters, machine guns, tanks, and other enemies (including some tough bosses). Hand-to-hand combat plays a part as well, with Duke unleashing a barrage of elbow bashes, uppercuts, kicks, gunstock smashes, and bionic punches. Background objects can be shot to collect power-ups. Like his better looking coin-op counterpart, Duke aims via gun site and has a large hole in his torso for a less obstructed view.

Dynamite Headdy

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Treasure. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Like many side-scrollers, *Dynamite Headdy* takes place in a cute, colorful land (Puppet World in this case), where a quirky lead character runs, jumps, and uses a cartoonish method for battling monsters. What makes *Dynamite Headdy* stand out is the titular hero's spring-loaded head, which can be switched out at various points throughout the game's 15 levels. There are 18 different heads, each granting Dynamite a different ability, such as vacuuming, climbing, swinging, bombing, spiky attacking, or flying (for some side-scrolling shooter action). There's even a basketball bonus round. Another quality title from Treasure, makers of *Gunstar Heroes*. Also released for the Game Gear.

Earnest Evans

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer:

Wolf Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

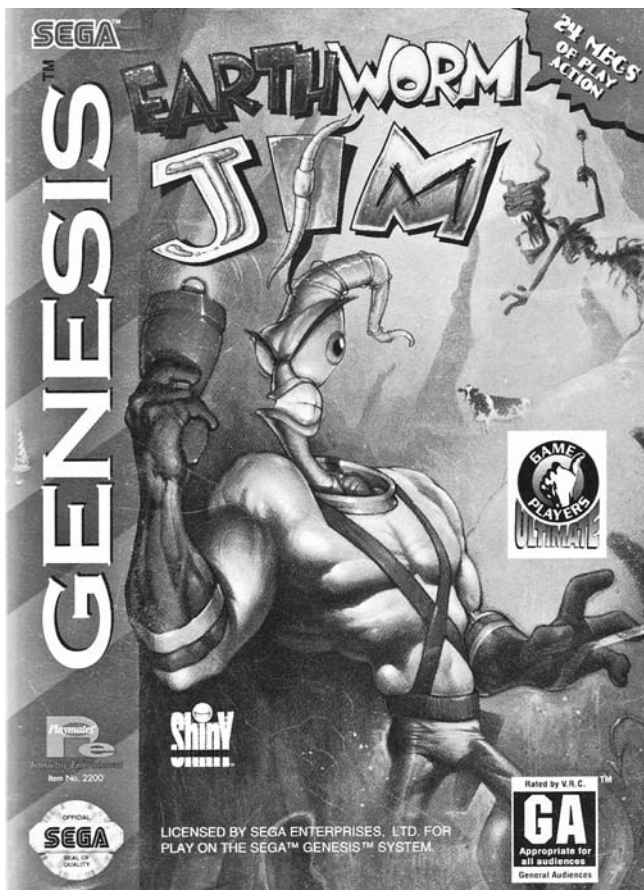
The prequel to *El Viento* (a much better game), *Earnest Evans* puts players in the role of the title character, who wields a chain whip and runs, jumps (over pits, spikes, lava, and the like), climbs, crouches, crawls, and rolls through caves and other areas. Unfortunately, the gangly fellow moves like a marionette, meaning he is awkward to control. In addition to his whip, Earnest can acquire a mace, rocks, and other weapons for staving off such enemies as skeletons, porcupines, tentacles, and monsters. Nice animation and detailed graphics can't save the clumsy gameplay.

Earth Defense

Publisher: Realtec. Developer: AV Artisan.

Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

A short, easy, obviously low-budget game, *Earth Defense* is called "The Earth Defend" on the title screen and in the cheaply produced manual. Earth is under attack by aliens, and it is up to the player — piloting the top-secret Phoenix Spitfire — to defend it (hence the clever title). Gameplay consists of flying over sea and desert and through clouds (there are five levels in all), firing away at robotic aliens, including some rather large end-level bosses. The Spitfire is equipped with a temporary invincibility shield and can collect such power-ups (released from defeated foes) as tri-shots, rear shots, and drone support ships. Although playable, the game is hurt by subpar graphics and sounds, and by severe slowdown. Unlicensed.



A platform shooter with a personality all its own, *Earthworm Jim* is fun, funny, and highly challenging.

Earthworm Jim

Publisher: Playmates Interactive Entertainment. Developer: Shiny Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

A highly popular game upon release, *Earthworm Jim* enamored players with its offbeat humor, colorfully detailed visuals, smooth animation, Tommy Tallarico music, zany sound effects, and hardcore gameplay. The title character, an earthworm donning a man-sized spacesuit, uses a rapid-fire Plasma Blaster to blow away pesky crows and hamsters, along with such memorable foes as Major Mucus, Peter Puppy, Professor Monkey for a Head, and Evil the Cat. He also climbs steep cliffs, dodges flying saucers, braves the fiery pits of hell, battles evil lawyers, launches a cow, engages in a bungee jumping battle over a pool of snot, and much more. Blaster ammo is limited, but Jim can pull himself out of his spacesuit and use his wormy body as a whip. Levels include: New Junk City, What the Heck?, Down

the Tubes, Snot a Problem, Level 5, Andy Asteroids (third-person racing action down a tunnel), For Pete's Sake, Intestinal Distress, and Buttville. Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, Game Boy Advance, and Game Gear. Enhanced for the Sega CD as *Earthworm Jim: Special Edition*, featuring a new world, a new introduction, a new weapon, and more.

Earthworm Jim 2

Publisher: Playmates Interactive Entertainment. Shiny Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1995.

Earthworm Jim 2 features the same type of surreal, absurdist humor found in the first game, but mixes things up by incorporating a variety of new gameplay elements. In addition to platform shooting, Jim must now: blast his way through an underground maze; work his way through intestinal passages as a weaponless blind cave salamander; avoid light bulbs and sharp objects while floating upward via his inflated head; answer game show trivia questions; take cows to a barn; bounce falling puppies to safety; and much more. Jim is now accompanied by Snott, a sentient mucus creature who acts as a swinging tool (replacing the whip swing) and a parachute (replacing the helicopter head). New weapons include: barn blaster (destroys everything onscreen), homing missile, bubble gun, and 3-finger gun (shoots three-way bullets). Levels include: Anything but Tangerines, Lorenzen's Soil, Jim's now a Blind Cave Salamander, Puppy Love, Udderly Abducted, Inflated Head, ISO 9000, and Level Ate. Like the original, *EJ 2* is hilarious and has excellent graphics, sounds, and gameplay. However, it is easier to beat. Also released for the SNES, Saturn, and Game Boy Advance. Followed by: *Earthworm Jim: Menace 2 the Galaxy* (GBC) and *Earthworm Jim 3D* (N64).

Ecco Jr.

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1995.

A Sega Club title, *Ecco Jr.* is the third game in the *Ecco the Dolphin* series and features similar controls. However, the game is easier and shorter than its predecessors and has a simpler

storyline, in which Ecco and his buddies, Tara the young orca and Kitnee the baby bottlenose dolphin, search for a giant whale named Baby Blue. Sonar helps players find hidden items, but it no longer reveals maps or acts as a weapon or a communication device. In addition, Ecco Jr. can't drown or otherwise die (the game is intended for kids, after all). There are plenty of things to do, however, like search for objects and sea life, play tag, find musical rings and match them to blue ring patterns, gather groups of shells and fish into caves, follow other dolphins, help a seal find its ball, reunite a lost baby with its mother, take all the treasures to the crystal door before other dolphins can get them, and more. Tara and Kitnee are playable characters, but controlling them doesn't affect gameplay. As with the two previous games, *Ecco Jr.* looks and sounds fantastic. Followed by: *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future* (PS2, DC).

Ecco the Dolphin

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

One of the most innovative and visually arresting games of the 16-bit era, *Ecco the Dolphin* finds the beautifully animated title character searching the depths of the sea for his family, which has been displaced by a mighty storm. Viewed from the side, Ecco can dart quickly to grab food and attack enemies, flip above the surface to get air (there are also air pockets in certain submerged caverns), and use sonar to reveal a map, ward off attackers, and get clues, special powers, and new songs. The map shows locations of barriers, movable rocks, enemies, healing clams, and more. The atmospheric music, gorgeous graphics, and moving storyline are integrated seamlessly with the gameplay as Ecco squeezes through tight spaces, solves puzzles, searches for glyphs, eats small fish, avoids sharks and squids, breaks through obstacles, moves rocks, fights through stiff currents, and communicates with and frees other sea life. Sometimes Ecco should move very quickly while other occasions call for him to swim slowly. A Zen-like experience from beginning to end (the game has 27 lushly illustrated lev-

els), *Ecco the Dolphin* is a true work of art. The Sega CD version boasts QSound and more than 30 levels. Also released for the Game Gear.

Ecco: The Tides of Time

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

The sequel to *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Ecco: The Tides of Time* is pleasingly similar to the original game, but has even better graphics and music. Once again, Ecco swims and darts around huge levels (40 in all), avoiding such enemies as jellyfish and sharks, replenishing air (by jumping above the surface or finding submerged air pockets), searching for glyphs that provide puzzle clues, and using sonar to reveal maps, activate certain items, and talk to other sea creatures. New to the formula are boss battles, a futuristic theme, different puzzles (such as one in which Ecco must follow another dolphin), five behind-the-dolphin view stages in which Ecco leaps through rings, and metaphors that transform Ecco into a jellyfish, a school of fish, a seahorse, a shark, and more. The Sega CD version is enhanced with full-motion video and QSound. Also released for the Game Gear. Followed by: *Ecco Jr.*

El Viento

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Set in 1920s New York, *El Viento* has players guiding the agile and speedy Annet, who is a running, jumping, climbing sorceress trying to stop a cult from resurrecting their evil wind god, Hastur (a story told through text-heavy cut scenes). Imbued with boomerangs and a variety of magical spells (fireballs, water, wind, an explosive ball, and energy spikes), Annet must battle her way through cult members, mafia goons, animals, and other enemies, including a Lovecraftian boss. Smooth controls, an unusual setting, and a spunky protagonist make the game worth seeking out. *Earnest Evans*, a disappointing prequel, followed.

Elemental Master

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer:

Technosoft. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Although shorter than one would hope, *Elemental Master* is nevertheless a fun, nicely designed game. Players run up the screen, unleashing a barrage of blue energy bolts on a wide variety of flying and ground-based creatures (including a giant porcupine boss). The first four levels are selectable, and each rewards players with an elemental weapon (diagonal fireballs, gusts of wind, spinning whirlpools, and the like) that can be charged up by holding down the fire button. In addition, players can shoot treasure chests to reveal such power-ups as crystals (shields), medicine, and mirrors (which produce mirror images of the protagonist). The ground players run on is nicely detailed and includes such obstacles as flames, craggy mountains, and rolling boulders. The screen is usually busy with activity (firing is constant), but slowdown is not a factor. Tight controls let players easily switch weapons on the fly or quickly face downward for attacks coming from behind. A nice change of pace from the many ship-based Genesis shooters, *Elemental Master* is an overlooked gem.

ESPN Baseball Tonight

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

As with most hardball games of the era, *ESPN Baseball Tonight* offers a behind-the-batter perspective. However, when the ball is hit into play, the view does not switch to overhead — the screen simply scrolls quickly to the left or right. The game uses its ESPN license to decent effect, boasting *Baseball Tonight* theme music and the digitized voices of Chris Berman and Dan Patrick. The 28 MLB team names are real, but player names are not. Passwords save League Championship and World Series progress, and Exhibition, Practice, and Home Run Derby modes are available, but stats cannot be saved, and there is no season mode. Thousands of frames of motion-captured animation were employed to make player movement look as authentic as reasonably possible on a 16-bit system. Despite its slow pace, the

game is arcade-like in nature. Scoring is typically high, players can guide the ball while a pitch is in the air, and there's not much in the way of simulation features. Also released for the SNES and Sega CD, the latter version boasting a 162-game season, all 28 Major League stadiums, Jumbotron animation after homeruns, and 10 minutes of video highlights.

ESPN National Hockey Night

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Park Place Productions/Sony Imagesoft. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

While it sits in the shadow of the great *NHL 95*, *ESPN National Hockey Night* is nevertheless a worthwhile representation of the icy sport. Not only does it boast the highly unusual option of two viewpoints (horizontal and vertical, selectable during gameplay), it offers a variety of other features and options, including: poke and body checks; penalties on or off; three period lengths (five, 10, and 20 minute); commentary from ESPN's Bill Clement; and various game modes, including Exhibition, Playoffs, and 84-game Season. The NHL Skills Challenge features Fastest Man, which has players speeding around the rink, and Shoot-out, in which gamers compete for the highest scoring percentage. Battery backup lets players save options, stats, and season progress. The game has large, nicely rendered players (represented by position and number, but not name), which were created (at least in part) by using more than 2,000 frames of motion-caption animation. Also released for the SNES, Sega CD, GBC, and PS2.

ESPN Speedworld

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Park Place Productions/Sony Imagesoft. Sports Car Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Featuring an interactive pit crew, 3D rendered graphics, and commentary by ESPN's Jerry Punch (who appears via full-motion video and offers hints and advice), *ESPN Speedworld* is NASCAR-style racing in which players drive a stock car down road courses, short tracks, and super speedways (there are five different tracks for each type of raceway).

After a qualifying round, the action kicks into top gear as gamers race against 23 computer-controlled cars, with speeds in excess of 200 mph. Success yields points that players can use to upgrade their car's engine, tires, and suspension. The game boasts "real racing and physics strategy," with banked turns, bumping, drafting, and slingshot passing. A second gamer can join in via split-screen mode. Despite its lack of NASCAR licensing, fans of the sport will want to give this game, which is viewed from behind the player's car, a spin. Also released for the SNES.

ESPN Sunday Night NFL

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Ringler Studios. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Featuring an introduction and commentary by Chris Berman, *ESPN Sunday Night NFL* boasts all 28 NFL teams from the 1993 season, but the lack of NHLPA licensing means real player names are not used. The vertical view of the field lets players see the action from one end zone to the other, and the camera zooms in on the receiver or the running back after they get the ball. Game modes include: Single, 1994 Season, Random Season, and Playoffs. Other features and options include: penalties, audibles, power blitzes, speed bursts, spin moves, saveable stats, no-huddle offense, two-point conversions, adjustable quarters (5, 10, or 15 minutes), weather conditions (dry, rain, or snow), three different types of kicks (deep, onside, and squib), and pre-game, half-time, and post-game reports. Also released for the SNES and Sega CD.

ESWAT: City Under Siege

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Terrorists, robots, helicopters, and other enemies are making life tough for the "ultimate crimebuster." Luckily, he's got numerous weapons at his disposal, including a gatling gun, missiles, a flame-thrower, and a Robocop-like ICE Combat Suit. In addition to walking around shooting bad guys, the eight levels of play consist of jumping over obstacles, riding

conveyor belts, blasting through obstacles, and more. Although certainly playable, the game varies greatly from its graphically superior coin-op counterpart, Sega's *ESWAT: Cyber Police* (1989), which has a larger lead character, a two-player simultaneous mode, and more human enemies. The console game adds a jetpack to the formula, along with unlimited ammo. Released as *E-SWAT* for the Master System.

Eternal Champions

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Although it owes much to *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*, *Eternal Champions* oozes with versatility, giving each of the game's nine playable characters distinctive personalities and fighting styles. There's everything from an Atlantean gladiator to a circus acrobat to a kick-boxing cyborg. Each fighter has around 30 moves or so (including weapons-based combat and special moves), and there are gruesome Overkills (burned at the stake, eaten by a dinosaur, etc.) that evoke the Fatalities in *Mortal Kombat*. The goal is to make it to the Eternal Champion, but players are given only one chance to beat him, causing potential frustration. Even so, this is a fun and deep game that can be played again and again. Six-button controller recommended. Followed by: *Eternal Champions: Challenge from the Dark Side* (Sega CD), which has four new fighters, 11 hidden characters, brutally graphic Cinekills, more combos and special moves, and better graphics and sounds.

Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing

Publisher: Sega. Developer: ACME Interactive. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Sporting a side-view perspective (complemented by an overhead view map), *Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing* stars the titular heavyweight, plus almost 30 fictional (if finely rendered) fighters. Each pugilist is rated according to power, stamina, speed, and defense, and players can even create their own character (savable by battery backup). During fights

(which are fun, but offer somewhat limited ring movement), each boxer has an energy meter that decreases with each hit taken. In addition, there are picture-based meters for the head and body. Forced retirement does play a role. Also released for the Game Gear.

Exile

Publisher: Renovation Products. Micro Factory. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

In *Exile*, the neighboring country of Luciel has attacked Sadler's land, prompting the desert warrior into action. In addition to deserts, Sadler will venture through villages, islands, and mountains. While players gather information, add non-playable characters (who offer advice and items) to their party, and explore the various lands, the view of the game is from overhead. During the action/dungeon sequences, the game switches to a side-view perspective, in which Sadler — in real-time — can jump, climb, hack, slash, and use magic (offensive magic comes in the form of fire and ice). As in many RPGs, *Exile* involves talking to villagers (ranging from bandits to holy men), solving puzzles (which are fairly simple), purchasing swords and shields, entering and exiting buildings, and battling enemies to acquire gold and level-up the protagonist. Treasure chests and pharmacies contain herbs and tonics for recovering hit points and magic points. The TurboGrafx-CD version of *Exile* adds voiceovers and animated intermissions. Followed by: *Exile: Wicked Phenomenon* (TurboGrafx-CD).

Ex-Mutants

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Malibu Interactive. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Based on the Malibu comic book series, *Ex-Mutants* puts players in the role of: the handsome Ackroyd, who wields an axe; or the beautiful Shannon, who fights using a nun-chaku. Weapon pick-ups include grenades, bombs, landmines, homing orbs, and explosive charges. Set in 2055 (after World War III), the post-apocalyptic action finds the world overrun with evil mutants, and it is up to the

player to destroy said mutants and rescue four Ex-Mutant pals. What this amounts to is a standard (if enjoyable) platformer with all the predictable attributes, including climbing ladders, jumping on moving platforms, riding elevators, cruising on a mine cart and a river log, riding on the roof of a subway, jumping over spikes, dodging fire, and beating up bad guys. Areas to battle through include caves, forests, sewers, laboratories, and a skyscraper. Prior to exiting each stage, players must locate a battery cell to give to Professor Killdare, a cyborg charged with repopulating the Earth with humans. Crisp controls and clear voice effects transcend *Ex-Mutants'* overly familiar game-play elements.

Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land

Publisher: Wisdom Tree. Developer: Wisdom Tree. Maze/Maze Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

In *Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land*, players guide Moses as he explores 100 mazes, using his staff and the “word of God” (a shooting implement) to ward off magicians, soldiers, taskmasters, and other enemies, and to remove such obstacles as the murmurings of Israel, the weaknesses of man, and the golden calf of sin. To complete a level, Moses must grab five question marks and a manna quota. Holy oil, new sandals, Bibles (which gamers earn by answering questions correctly), and other items aid Moses in his quest. There are 250 trivia questions, all based on the book of *Exodus*. The game, which uses the *Crystal Mines* engine, is essentially the same as the original NES version, but with slightly better graphics. Similar to: *Boulder Dash* (NES, various) and *Joshua and the Battle of Jericho* (Genesis). Unlicensed.

ExoSquad

Publisher: Playmates Interactive Entertainment. Developer: Novotrade. Third-Person Shooter/Platform Shooter/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Based on the regrettably short-lived, anime-influenced cartoon series (1993–1994), *ExoSquad* is a graphically impressive game sport-

ing three types of action. In the third-person shooter sequences (à la *After Burner*), players guide Marsh's large, mech-like E-Frame through the skies, firing at airborne enemies. Holding down B emits continuous fire while holding down A charges the weapon for a more powerful blast. In the side-scrolling platform shooter areas, players walk Bronski's E-Frame to the right, ducking under enemy fire and jumping over obstacles. Aiming is done by guiding crosshairs, and there are shields and a chargeable firing mechanism. In Duel Mode (easily the most enjoyable and best-controlling part of the game), players fight one another or the computer, using a selection of warriors from the ExoSquad and Neosapien forces. Each warrior is equipped with a nice variety of moves, including punches, a rolling attack, crosshair targeting, a flying charge, a flipping somersault kick, and more.

F-15 Strike Eagle II

Publisher: MicroProse Software. Developer: MicroProse UK/Krisalis Software. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1993.

A serviceable port of the 1989 computer game, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is the sequel to the 1985 computer classic, *F-15 Strike Eagle*. Players, viewing the action from inside the cockpit (actually, there are four cockpit views, plus an external view), pilot the title fighter, which is billed as “one of the fastest, most maneuverable, and most powerful military aircraft in the world.” It is armed with the following: 16 amraams, 8 mavericks, 1000 cannon rounds, and 30 Chaff/30 Flare. The lower half of the screen shows the instrument panel while the top half is where the action takes place. In addition to reading maps, monitoring displays, battling enemies, and avoiding enemy missiles, gamers must fire cannons, air-to-ground missiles, and air-to-air missiles to destroy primary and secondary targets. Landing plays a role as well. There are six areas in which to do battle: Libya, The Gulf, Vietnam, Mid-East, Nordkapp, and Europe. Difficulty levels include rookie, pilot, veteran, and ace. The follow-up, *F-15 Strike Eagle III*, was only released for computers.

F-22 Interceptor

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1991.

Boasting more than 100 missions across four combat zones (United States, Iraq, Korea, and Russia), *F-22 Interceptor* is an early attempt at 3D polygonal graphics, giving it a crude, dated look. Players pilot the titular Advanced Tactical Fighter, using its missiles and other weaponry to destroy air and ground targets, which include helicopters, tanks, gunships, and anti-aircraft guns. Landing on aircraft carriers and refueling from tankers is also required. A Mission Generator mode lets players create their own battles, and two viewpoints are available (behind-the-plane and a cockpit view), but gameplay feels redundant nevertheless.

F-117 Night Storm

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1993.

In *Night Storm*, players pilot the F-117 Stealth fighter, a covert operations aircraft equipped with an M61-A1 20 mm Cannon, along with various types of player- and computer-guided missiles and bombs. The craft is designed for surgical strikes against heavily guarded targets, which are color-coded on the mapping screen. The campaign consists of 30 missions taking place through the training grounds of Nevada, over downtown Baghdad, and into the MIG-infested skies of Cuba, Grenada, Lybia, Panama, Peru, Korea, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The primary view of the action is from inside the cockpit.

The Faery Tale Adventure

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: New World Computing. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

Adapted from the 1987 Amiga computer game, *The Faery Tale Adventure* has players guiding three brothers (brave Julian, lucky Phillip, and gentle Kevin) on eight lengthy quests through the Magical Land of Holm (forests, deserts, oceans, villages, and the like), using a sword to engage in real-time battles

with dragons, skeletons, wraiths, and other monsters. As the brothers progress through the adventure (gamers begin with Julian and then use Phillip and then Kevin if necessary), they will gain other useful items, such as a map, a magic wand, a teleportation device, and artificial sunlight. Defeating foes rewards bravery points while giving money to beggars provides kindness points for talking to animals and wizards. The action is viewed from a $\frac{3}{4}$ overhead perspective.

Family Feud

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Eurocom. Game Show, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Like the SNES version, *Family Feud* for the Genesis isn't officially hosted by the emcee of the popular TV game show (which was Ray Combs at the time), but it does recreate the set and atmosphere of the program nicely, complete with official theme song, relatively accurate sound effects, and the families' names cross-stitched into the walls behind the booths. The familiar gameplay finds two five-member families buzzing in to guess the most popular answers (culled from a survey of 100 people) to such questions as "name something people start but never finish." GameTek also released *Family Feud* for NES and 3DO.

Fantasia

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Infogrames. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Based on the classic Disney film (1940), *Fantasia* for the Genesis has players controlling Mickey Mouse as the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Our hero must find missing musical notes hidden in five vast worlds, including the Sorcerer's Dungeon and Bald Mountain. During his quest, Mickey will hop on and cast spells at such enemies as marching brooms, dancing hippos, poisonous mushrooms, and flying horses. Many notes are well hidden, platforms move quickly, magic usage is limited, and the controls are sluggish, causing undue frustration. Lush visuals and classical music can't save this disappointing platformer. Disney fans should stick with *Castle of Illusion*.

Fantastic Dizzy

Publisher: Codemasters. Developer: Chameleon Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Released for the NES as *The Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy*, the graphically improved *Fantastic Dizzy* for the Genesis puts players in the role of an egg-shaped adventurer who must rescue his girlfriend Daisy from the evil wizard Zaks, who has taken the damsel in distress to his castle in the clouds. Retrieving her requires finding 250 magic stars (compared to 100 in the non-Aladdin NES version) scattered throughout the game's cartoon-like lands, which are filled with pirates, wizards, trolls, magicians, leprechauns, and other strange creatures. Areas to explore include The Graveyard, Treehouse Village, Castle Street, Dragon's Lair, Bubbling Fun, and more. During his quest, Dizzy will run, jump, swim, ride a mine cart, ride bubbles, ride elevators, talk to characters, use a rope to swing across chasms, and pick up and use objects to solve puzzles, such as keys to unlock doors and a plank of wood to build a bridge over a spiky pit. The game is long and challenging, making the absence of passwords or battery backup regrettable. Other games in the series include *Dizzy the Adventurer* (NES) and *Spindizzy Worlds* (SNES).

Fatal Fury

Publisher: Takara. Developer: Takara/Aspect. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Unlike its Super NES counterpart, *Fatal Fury* for the Genesis retains the two-plane fighting action of SNK's 1991 arcade game (*Fatal Fury: King of Fighters*), which allowed players to move their character back and forth between the foreground and the background. However, the Genesis version is missing the bonus rounds and two of the characters: Hwa Jai and Billy Kane. Otherwise, gameplay is essentially the same, with players punching, kicking, and throwing each other in a series of one-on-one battles (as with the SNES rendition, the two-on-one battles are missing). Special moves, such as fireballs and uppercuts, are hard to execute, but the game will appeal to *Street Fighter II* fans. Also released for the PS2 (via *Fatal Fury*

Battle Archives Vol. 1), Neo Geo, and Neo Geo CD.

Fatal Fury 2

Publisher: Takara. Developer: Takara/Aspect. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

As with the original *Fatal Fury*, *Fatal Fury 2* distinguishes itself from *Street Fighter II* by letting players move their character at will between the foreground and background. There are eight standard playable characters (including street fighter Terry Bogard, Australian wrestler Big Bear, and Korean Taekwondo master Kim Kaphwan), plus gamers can play as any of four bosses. Each character can pull off a variety of attacks tailored to their special skills. And, of course, there are special moves, such as Muay Thai champion Joe Higashi's hurricane upper. When a character's health gets low and flashes red, he or she can execute an especially powerful super special move. A few frames of animation are missing from the arcade version (SNK, 1992), and the voice effects are a bit garbled, but this is a nice looking, finely programmed port of a fantastic game, especially when played with a six-button controller. Also released for the PS2 (via *Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1*), SNES, and Neo Geo. Followed by: *Fatal Fury Special* (Sega CD, various), *Fatal Fury 3* (various), and other sequels.

Fatal Labyrinth

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

In *Fatal Labyrinth*, a brave swordsman named Trykaar must retrieve a holy goblet from Dragonia Castle, which is comprised of 30 randomly generated floors. The treacherous, monster-filled castle contains tons of useful items, including armor, food (but don't eat too much), potions, weapons (knives, rings, spears, shurikens, a bow, an axe, a helmet, and a shield), and magic spells (fire, ice, thunder, and the like). To access certain areas, Trykaar must break down walls. *Fatal Labyrinth* is playable, but combat is weak, thanks to an unusual control system in which attacks are executed by pressing and holding down the d-pad.

Fatal Rewind

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Raising Hell Productions. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

A port of 1990's *The Killing Game Show* (Amiga), *Fatal Rewind* borrows conceptually from Stephen King's *The Running Man* (1982 paperback original King penned under the pseudonym of Richard Bachman), putting players in a potentially fatal game show. Out-fitted in robotic armor, players must work their way up 12 themed levels (as opposed to 16 in the computer game), shooting geometric shapes while moving quickly to avoid rising lava. There are weapons and power-ups to grab, but keys for opening doors are the most important items to locate. If the player dies (a common occurrence), he or she can jump back in at any point while the computer replays the scene.

Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Aisystem Tokyo. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Released the same year as its NES counterpart, *Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge* features a number of flourishes not available in the 8-bit version, including customizable cars (engine, tires, and brakes), two-player split-screen racing, and selectable road and weather conditions. Also, the viewpoint is a little different as only the front-most portion of the car can be seen, and the playfield takes up the bottom half of the screen instead of the top two-thirds. The game has players racing against the clock around 16 twisting, turning tracks across six continents. Also released for the Game Boy.

FIFA International Soccer

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Viewed from a highly effective $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective, *FIFA International Soccer* is loaded with features and options, including diving headers, slide tackles, bicycle kicks, fouls, variable weather conditions, arcade and simulation style

gameplay, manual and computer controlled goalies, grass and artificial turf, and much more. The players are small, but nicely animated, and the controls and sounds are spot-on. Especially impressive is the chanting crowd. The first title in a long-running series, *FIFA International Soccer* helped bring video game soccer to the mainstream masses. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES. The 3DO and Sega CD versions feature full-motion video clips and enhanced audio.

FIFA Soccer 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

This sequel to *FIFA International Soccer* features the same $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective, but offers a number of new features: faster gameplay, improved shot control (including give-and-go action), new player animations, more aggressive computer opponents, suspensions, multi-game injuries, and customizable victory celebrations (drum, siren, or the patented “gooooaaal!” sound effect). More than 200 international teams (up from 48) compete for one of eight cups in Tournament, Playoff, or League play. Like the original game, *FIFA Soccer 95* is compatible with EA's 4 Way Play adapter, making for a fun party title.

FIFA Soccer 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

The follow-up to *FIFA Soccer 95*, this game expands upon the series by adding a number of new features: improved give-and-go action; smarter and faster players; more aggressive goalies; on-the-fly management of set plays; SGI 3D modeled animations; better breakaways (including new sprint dribbles and passing arrows); and a Practice Mode that offers scrimmage play and help with shootouts, free kicks, and throw-ins. More than 3800 players from 237 international teams are included, along with full League, Playoff, and Tournament modes. Once again, the game offers 4 Way Play support and an isometric

perspective. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, SNES, PSX, and Saturn.

FIFA Soccer 97

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions/XYZ Productions. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

The fourth game in the series, *FIFA Soccer 97* is similar to *FIFA Soccer 96* (complete with 4 Way Play support and isometric perspective), but it does boast a few fresh features, including: a six aside indoor game, faster gameplay, a challenging Pro mode, new sound effects and crowd chants, smarter goalies, and improved set plays. Also released for the Game Boy, SNES, PSX, and Saturn. Followed by numerous sequels for a variety of systems.

Fighting Masters

Publisher: Treco. Developer: Almanic Corp. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

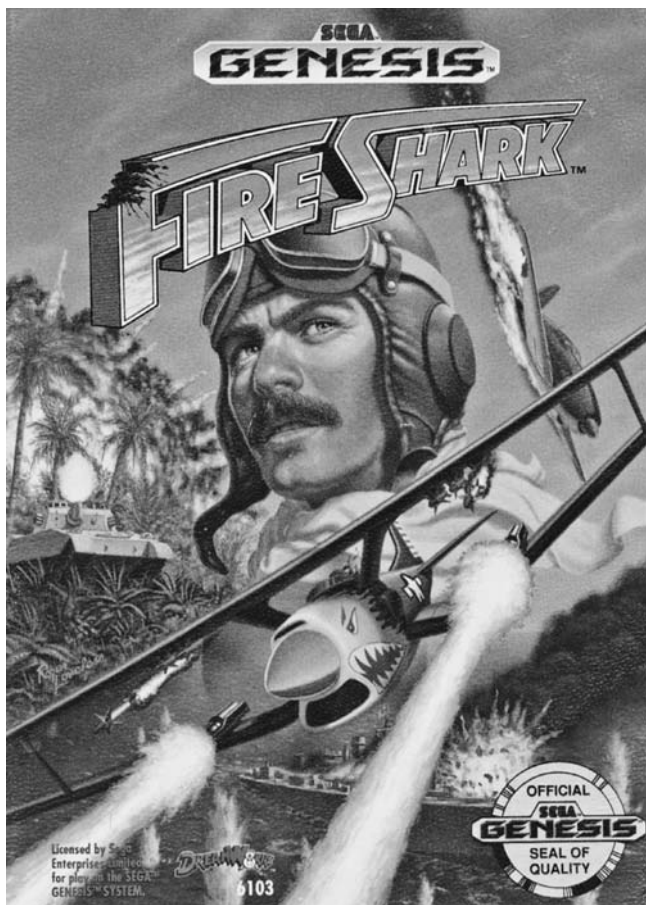
Thanks to limited moves, poor animation, faulty collision detection, and small characters, *Fighting Masters* is one of the weaker fighting games of the 16-bit era (which boasts such heavyweights as *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat* and such turkeys as *Shaq-Fu* and *Rise of the Robots*). Players select from 12 different fighters (humans, aliens, and animals), each of whom can punch, kick, jump, wrestle, and pull off a few special moves. The objective is to save a civilization from extinction by beating 11 standard challengers, plus the ultra powerful Lord Valgasu, who is 56 feet tall and weighs 666 pounds.

Final Zone

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

In *Final Zone*, which takes place 100 years in the future, play-

ers don a New Age Power-Suit, which is a bulky, robotic combat machine equipped with 14 of 20 available weapons (handheld and body-mounted), including lasers, landmines, grenades, a bazooka, and flamethrowers. Getting hit takes away a weapon, and when all 14 are gone, the game will end. The action is viewed from an isometric perspective, with gamers maneuvering through such areas as streets, ruins, a desert, a valley, a cave, and enemy headquarters (seven levels in all), shooting such enemies as tanks, robots, gun turrets, and helicopters (nukes and other weapons of mass destruction have been banned). Clearing a stage requires players to destroy all the enemies. Underrated and overlooked at the time of its release, *Final Zone* holds up surprisingly



An excellent vertical scrolling shooter, *Fire Shark* is a nice port of Romstar's 1990 arcade game (sans the two-player simultaneous mode).

well and is a perfectly acceptable shooter. Followed by: *Final Zone II* (TurboGrafx-CD).

Fire Shark

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: Toaplan. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Despite missing the two-player simultaneous mode, *Fire Shark* for the Genesis is a finely programmed port of Romstar's 1990 arcade game. Gameplay is just about flawless, with players flying a biplane over cities, deserts, forests, and oceans, shooting bullets at nicely drawn, nicely animated fighters, tanks, cannons, bombers, trucks, cargo ships, submarines, and other vehicles. Enemies are numerous, moving all over the screen, and players are given ample firepower to fend them off (rapid fire option recommended). The standard biplane weapon is a three-way wide shot, but players can grab shark beam (green laser that fires forward in a spiral pattern) and super fire (up to four beams that shoot in various directions) icons for increased offensive power. Each of the three weapons can be upgraded several times. Other items to grab include speed, lups, 2ups, bonus points, and bombs. There are three difficulty levels, and players can adjust lives from 1 to 4 per game, making for a challenging, but nicely balanced game. *Fire Shark* doesn't do anything particularly new (it borrows liberally from such shooters as *1942*, *Tiger-Heli*, and *Truxton*), but it does everything so well you won't care.

Flashback: The Quest for Identity

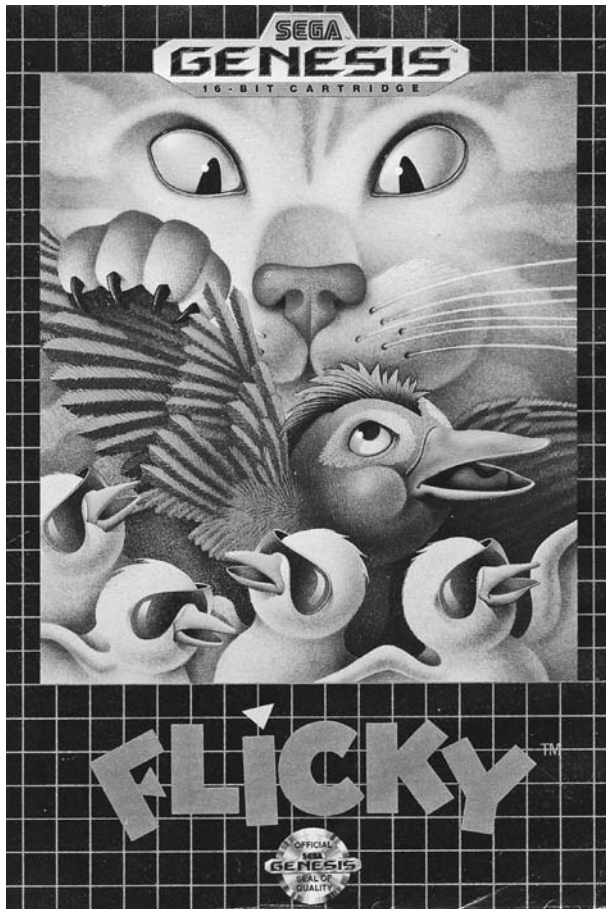
Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Delphine Software. Adventure/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Thanks to its cinematic presentation, beautifully drawn backgrounds, and effective use of rotoscoped animation (giving characters unusually fluid movements), *Flashback* is dubbed "the CD-ROM game packaged in a cartridge." Players guide

Galaxia Bureau agent Conrad Hart through seven expansive levels (including Planet Titan and New Washington), running, jumping, shooting bad guys, turning somersaults, climbing tall structures, teleporting, opening doors, talking to people, and riding elevators, taxis, and subways. There are numerous objects to find and use, including keys, mechanical mice, stones, and shields. This epic adventure was also released for the SNES and Jaguar. The 3DO and Sega CD versions are enhanced with movie-like cinema scenes and more voice effects.

Flicky

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.



A terrific port of Sega's 1984 arcade semi-classic, *Flicky* is a highly entertaining old-school platformer.

In *Flicky*, players guide the titular blue-bird as he runs and jumps on platforms in a series of wraparound levels, gathering up chirps (little yellow birds) and taking them to an exit door. Taking one chirp at a time gets the job done, but grabbing groups of chirps scores extra points. In addition, working quickly racks up bonus points. Tiger cats and Iggy lizards can break up groupings of chirps (or eliminate Flicky by touching him), but Flicky can pick up and throw tea cups, flowerpots, apples, and other items at the pesky pests. Special bonus rounds find Flicky moving side to side, trying to catch falling chirps with his net. An excellent port of Sega's 1984 arcade game, *Flicky* is a delightful, but relatively obscure game that deserves more recognition. Fans of such old-school, pre-*Super Mario Bros.* games as *Keystone Kapers*, *Mario Bros.*, *Mappy*, and *Popeye* should thoroughly enjoy it. Like most of the better arcade classics, *Flicky* starts off easy, but gets smoothly and progressively more difficult, enticing the gamer to play "just one more time."

The Flintstones

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

A cute take on the classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon, which ran on ABC from 1960 to 1966, *The Flintstones* is six levels of frolicsome fun. As a running, jumping, club-swinging, nicely drawn and animated Fred Flintstone, players hop on moving platforms, club dinosaurs to create platforms, walk and swim underwater, smack dinosaurs, crabs, and other creatures over the head (including many oddballs not seen on the show), and much more. Gobbling apples replenishes health, and Fred can ride various vehicles and animals, including a car (through the desert, jumping over gaps and longhorn skulls), a pterodactyl (hop really high while going up a vertical area filled with platforms), and a shark (go across water while dodging and clubbing flying fish). Fred's mission is to help Wilma, Barney, and others each find a missing item, but the platforming action is fairly routine in nature. One unusual aspect is that Fred jumps and then grabs onto ledges

and pulls himself up to reach higher platforms. The theme song is horribly off key, and the sound effects aren't much better, but this is a fun little game overall.

Foreman for Real

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Software Creations. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

At first glance, *Foreman for Real* is a wonder to behold, thanks to motion capture technology. The digitized fighters, including former Heavy Weight Champion George Foreman himself, look surprisingly real, and the game boasts smooth animation. After a few minutes of play, however, gamers will notice the cart's many faults, most notably its sluggish controls and dearth of onscreen information (you have to pause the game to check health status). Even the graphics wear thin in short order as the color palette is limited, the boxers' bodies appear interchangeable, and the boxers' faces are strangely expressionless (though they do jerk to the side when hit). The behind-the-boxer view evokes *Punch-Out!!* (NES) to some degree, and players can select from a variety of fictional boxers (plus a highly formidable Foreman), each rated according to power, speed, stamina, offense, and defense. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES.

Forgotten Worlds

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1989.

Despite missing two levels (seven down from nine), the absence of rotary control, and some reduction in graphical detail, *Forgotten Worlds* for the Genesis is a nice port of Capcom's 1988 arcade game. The basic flying man firing-in-all-directions gameplay remains intact, as does the gathering of money and the purchasing of cannons, burners, homing lasers, armor, health, power-ups, and other weapons and items. The game makes the act of spinning in circles and shooting zillions of aliens tons of fun. Unlike the TurboGrafx-CD version (which has better graphics), the Genesis game keeps the two-player mode intact.

Formula One

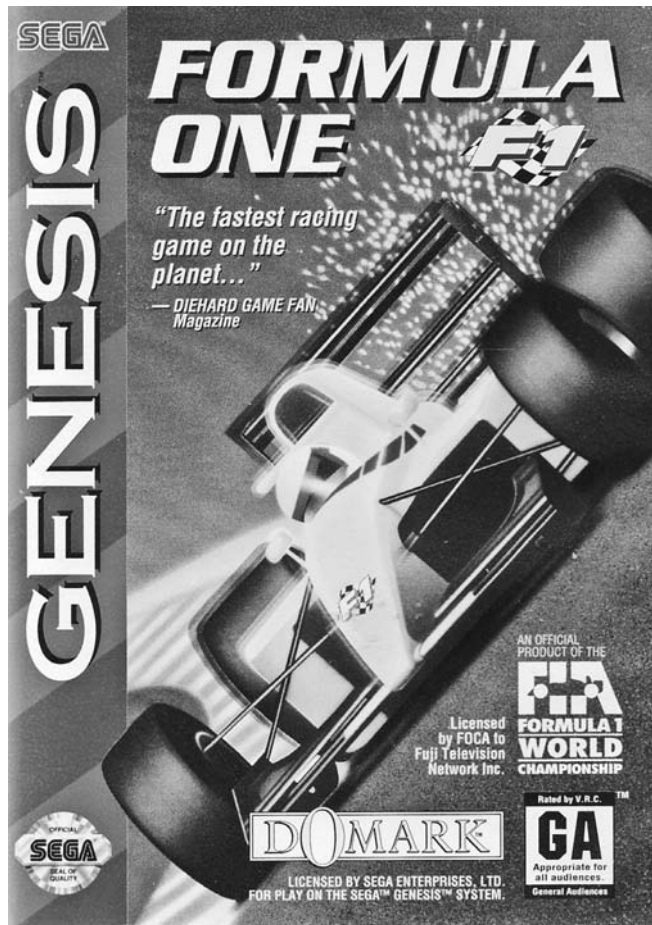
Publisher: Domark Software.
Developer: Lankhor/Tiertex/The Kremlin. *Formula-1/Indy Racing*, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

An official product of the FIA Formula One World Championship, *Formula One* puts players low on the track, viewing the action from the cockpit of their turbo-charged F1 racer. Training mode lets players practice on any of the 12 circuits (such as the Monte Carlo in Monaco or the Hockenheim in Germany) against fairly non-aggressive drivers. In Arcade mode, the goal is to overtake a set number of other cars. Championship mode, in which the driver (and his or her team) receives points for placing in the top six, lets players select the number and the order of the tracks using a Circuit Selection Screen. Track features include braking points, chicanes (tight s-curves), curbs (which wear down tires), marbles (gravel-covered sections), and straightaways. Four skill levels are available — novice, amateur, professional, and practice — and players will enter pit stops to change their car's wings, transmission (manual or automatic), and tire type (hard, medium or soft). A second player can join in via split-screen action. Whether playing solo or with a friend, a third of the screen is taken up by data and a top-down map of the current course. Also released for the Game Gear. Similar to: *Super Monaco GP*.

Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Iguana UK. *Sports/Baseball*, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball features more than 700 authentic Major Leaguers, each rated according to the 1994 baseball season.



Fans of *Super Monaco GP* may enjoy *Formula One*, which offers 12 racing circuits.

There are no team names, but the game does offer seven modes of play: CPU vs. CPU, Exhibition, Home Run Derby, Playoffs, Season, Clutch Time (featuring 16 different scenarios), and Quick Play (one strike and you're out). The game is viewed from the catcher's perspective, but once the ball is hit into play the camera elevates to a ¼ look at the field. Graphically, the game is a success, with large players, nice looking (if inauthentic) stadiums, and motion capture fielding and pitching for smooth, realistic animation. The large batters are especially impressive. Other options and features include: run downs, squeezes, stolen bases, high spikes, bad hops, rain delays, double play pivots, adjustable lineups and fielders, three pitching heights and speeds, pitchers that tire and have

hot/cold streaks, and battery backup for 23 statistical categories. Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, Game Gear, PSX, and Saturn.

Frogger

Publisher: Majesco Sales. Developer: Morning Star Multimedia. Action, 1 or 2 players. 1998.

Unlike the Super Nintendo version of *Frogger*, which features unnecessarily enhanced graphics and an eerie lack of music (an unforgivable omission), *Frogger* for the Genesis is a largely accurate port of Sega's classic arcade game (1981), complete with folk tunes "Camp-town Races" and "Yankee Doodle." The game's simple four-way control has players maneuvering a frog across a busy highway (the bottom half of the screen) and then across a river bustling with activity. The challenge lies in avoiding vehicles that move at various speeds and using good timing to hop on logs, turtles (some of which sink), and the backs of alligators. Edible flies appearing in bays and amorous lady frogs appearing on logs can be jumped on for extra points (just watch out for alligators popping up in bays and otters that appear in later levels). The infinitely repeating goal is to jump a frog into each of the five home bays positioned across the top of the playfield. The only real criticism of the game is its utter dearth of extra features or game modes. The last commercially licensed Genesis release in the U.S., *Frogger* has appeared on numerous consoles and spawned countless remakes and sequels, including *Frogger* (PSX), *Frogger II: Threedeep!* (Atari 2600, 5200, ColecoVision), *Frogger 2* (GBC), and *Frogger Beyond* (GC, Xbox).

Fun 'N' Games

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Leland Interactive Media. Educational/Art/Music/Maze/First-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

Designed for younger players, *Fun 'N' Games* offers a variety of ways to have fun, including: a drawing program (with patterns, stamps, animation, special effects, and more); a music machine (with 15 instruments, 28 sound effects, and more); a character dressing activity (where players mix and match bodies, heads, legs, and outfits); and three simple arcade-style

games: two maze contests and one shooter. Fans of *Art Alive* should enjoy this game.

Funny World/Balloon Boy

Publisher: Realtec. Developer: AV Artisan. Non-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

The title character in *Balloon Boy* walks back and forth along the bottom of the screen, shooting upward at balloons. When a balloon is shot, it will release an item or an enemy. Grabbing apples, cakes, and other food grants points while such objects as anvils, spiders, and birds should be avoided. Certain enemies that crawl along the ground can be jumped over or leapt upon. Popping all the balloons ends a level. This goes on for 50 levels. There's nothing particularly hilarious about *Funny World*, a first-person target shooter in which players aim and fire a gun that is affixed to the bottom center of the screen. The targets are cutesy little animals that scamper across the screen either quickly or slowly. Animals toting a blue bag give players rapid fire while those carrying a yellow bag enable smart bombs (called "big rock"). Players should avoid shooting the occasional princess walking by. This goes on for 25 levels. Both *Balloon Boy* and *Funny World* are playable, but repetitive and primitive. Unlicensed and it shows.

Gadget Twins

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Imagitec Design. Action, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

In *Gadget Twins*, players control a cute, bug-eyed airplane named Bop as he flies through the skies and underwater, punching Gizmo Gadgets (birds, planes, and sea life) that swim, swoop, snap, sting, dive, and otherwise make life difficult for the cartoonish hero. In two-player mode, the second gamer controls a similar plane called Bump. To thwart a foe, players utilize a less-than-desirable weapon: a short-reach spring glove that punches up, down, right, and left (in conjunction with button presses on the D-pad). Opening barrels and pirate chests gives players such useful objects as shields, bombs, and extra lives while grabbing coins lets players purchase such weapons

as a hammer, a hover mine, a spinner, weights, and a yo-yo. *Gadget Land* is comprised of six levels: Gadget Bay, Zeppelin Attack, The Lost City, Sub Attack, The Crystal Lake and Thump's World, each of which is filled with such obstacles as air currents, magnets, moving walls, stomping shoes, and/or jack-in-the-box clowns. Despite the aforementioned lame main weapon, *Gadget Twins* is a delightful (if difficult) game, especially for fans of the underwater sequences in *Super Mario Bros.* and *Sonic the Hedgehog*.

Gaiares

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Reno. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

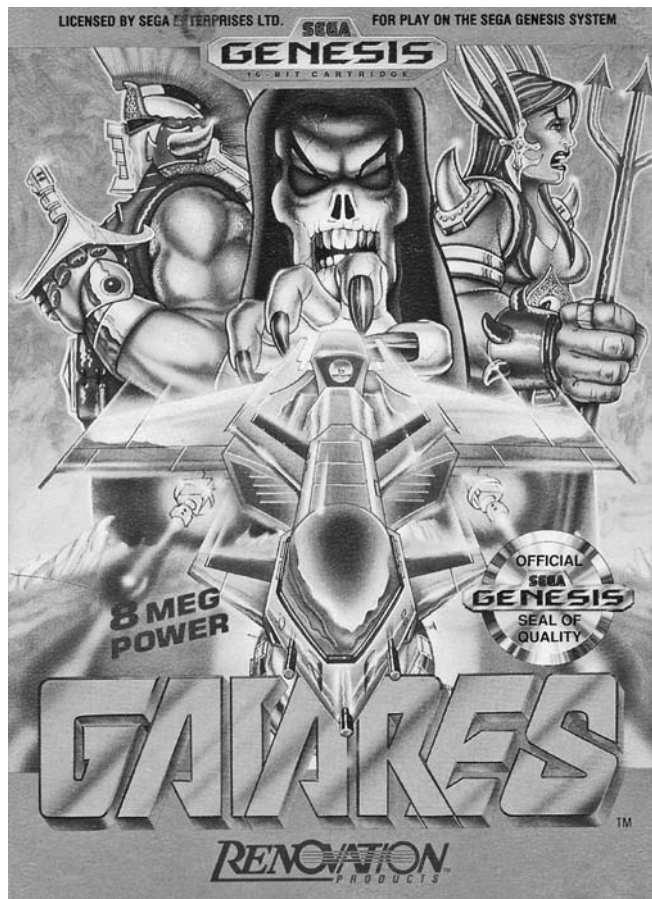
One of the best side-scrolling shooters for any system of any era, *Gaiares* is a tough-as-nails game that incorporates an innovative, fun-to-use implement called a "TOZ," which can detach from the player's three-speed ship, dock onto an enemy, and transfer that enemy's weaponry (lasers, rotating bullets, a plasma cannon, etc.) or defensive mechanism (such as shields) to the player's ship. Gigantic bosses, expert level design, intense shooting action, zero slow-down, richly illustrated visuals, and other features make *Gaiares* an essential part of the Genesis library. Similar to: *Gradius* and *R-Type*.

Gain Ground

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Sanritsu. Non-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A nice port of Sega's 1988 arcade game, *Gain Ground* consists of five worlds: Dark Ages, the Renaissance, the Golden Age, Present Day, and the Near Future, each of which is divided into 10 top-down stages. In each stage, players walk around shooting bullets,

bombs, grenades, spears, boomerangs, missiles, or other weapons at a plethora of enemies. The way to beat a level is to go through the exit or to kill all the enemies, and there are bosses to contend with at the end of each world. There are 20 selectable characters, each with a normal weapon and a special weapon. The action moves slowly, but there's a surprising amount of strategy involved as weapons have different firing capabilities: low, high, short range, long range, left and right simultaneously, and the like. It's important to select the right character for the right area. The game is somewhat similar to *Gauntlet*, but with no scrolling and more thinking. The game is average in terms of visuals, but the methodically enjoyable action is accompanied by a terrific musical score and a fun, highly beneficial cooperative mode.



Gaiares is the hardcore shooter to end all hardcore shooters — side-scrolling action at its finest.

Galahad

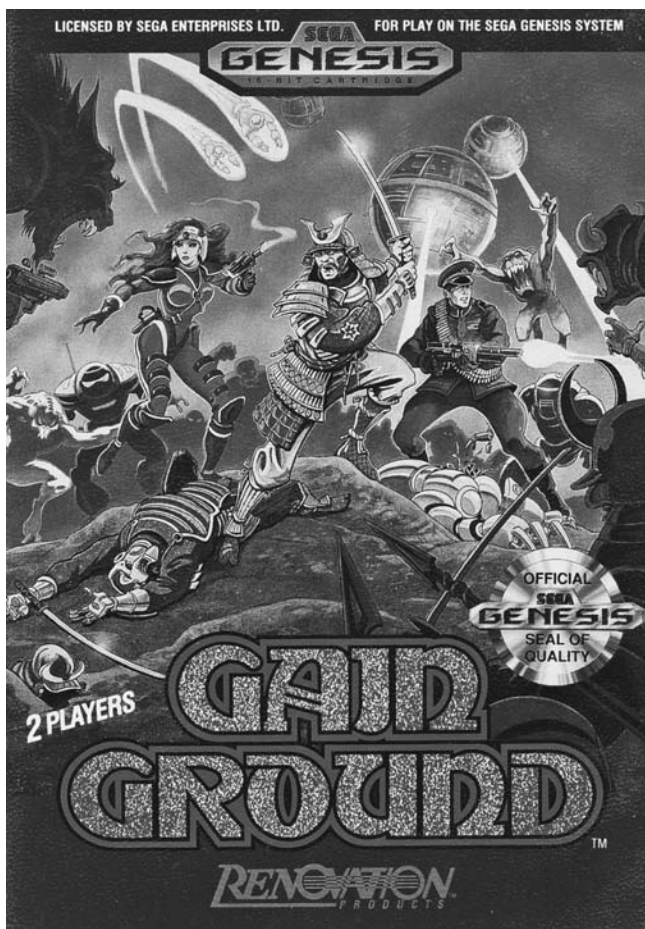
Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Traveller's Tales. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Unlike most platformers, which move primarily from left to right, *Galahad* has players searching for artifacts (crowns, chalices, and the like) and taking them to specific areas (such as caves), meaning regenerating enemies and backtracking (within levels) are part of the action. The titular knight is outfitted with a sword and armor (both which can be upgraded via shops) for battling more than 100 types of enemies (including dragons, elves, and snakes) through 21 nicely rendered, fantasy-themed levels. Jumping onto moving platforms, leaping across gaps and obstacles, and ducking under low flying birds complement the quest-based objectives.

Galaxy Force II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: CRI. Space Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1991.

A scaled down port of Sega's 1988 arcade game (which benefited from a sit-down simulation cabinet and more challenging gameplay), *Galaxy Force II* has players piloting a swept-wing attack fighter through tunnels, canyons, and outer space, firing bullets and homing missiles at gunships, robotic armies, torpedo launchers, and other enemies while banking, dodging, and diving to avoid such obstacles as volcanic pillars, meteors, and fire snakes. The viewpoint is from behind the craft, and the enemies often scale into view from over the horizon (an effect that looked much better in the arcade game). Similar to: *After Burner II* (Genesis) and *Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom* (Atari 5200, ColecoVision).



Gauntlet fans should check out *Gain Ground*, which is based on the 1988 Sega arcade game.

Garfield: Caught in the Act

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

Garfield: Caught in the Act removes the famously fat comic strip cat from suburbia and has him explore five different movie-inspired worlds: Count Slobula's Castle, The Revenge of Orangebeard, Cave Cat 3,000,000 B.C., Catsablanca, and The Curse of Cleofatra. Garfield can claw and throw objects at the various ghosts, bats, crabs, bulldogs, birds, and other enemies he encounters, and he must also find keys, push boulders, jump over gaps, climb trees, and more. Garfield creator Jim Davis would surely appreciate the game's cartoonish graphics and lighthearted gameplay, but he

might scoff at its brevity and iffy controls. Also released for the Game Gear.

Gargoyles

Publisher: Buena Vista Interactive. Developer: Disney Interactive. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

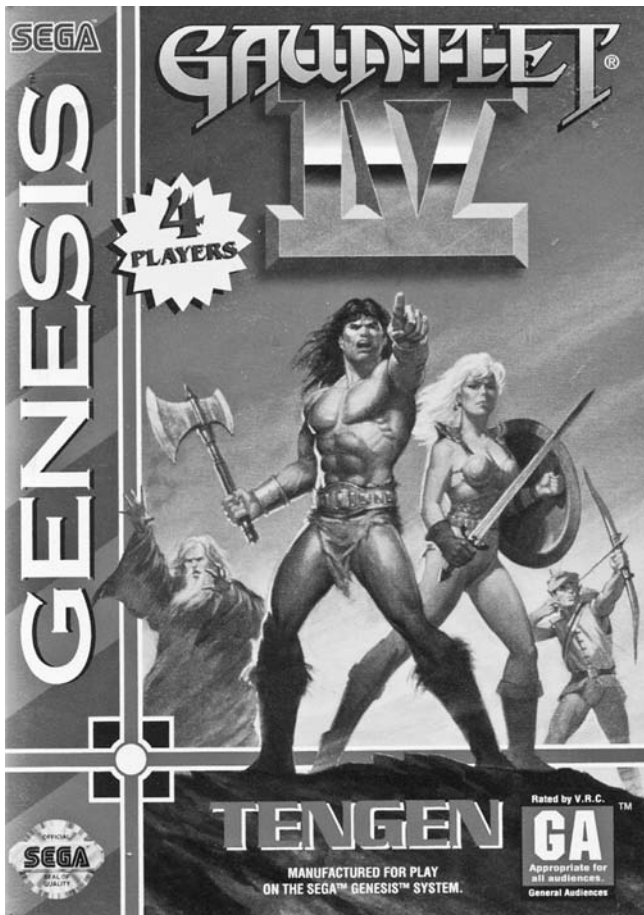
A 16-bit take on the Walt Disney animated television series (1994–1997), *Gargoyles* puts players in the role of Goliath, a New York-based gargoyle who must destroy an ancient relic (the Eye of Odin) that could destroy the world. During his 18-stage quest (spread over five levels), Goliath must climb tall stone buildings, jump/flap over obstacles, open doors, dive-roll to break through walls, and claw,

throw, and pounce on archers, Vikings, mechanical animals (including Raptorbots, Spiderbots, and Waspbots), and other enemies. One impressive enemy in particular is the futuristic looking Thor 3000. The hand-to-hand aerial combat is an unusual gameplay element, and the layered, atmospheric, richly detailed visuals are topnotch. Further, it's not always immediately clear what to do next, making for a challenging game.

Gauntlet IV

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: M2. Maze Shooter/Adventure, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A must-own Genesis exclusive, *Gauntlet IV* gives players a near-perfect port of Atari's 1985 arcade classic, *Gauntlet*, plus a Quest Mode entitled "Gauntlet, Episode IV: The Castle of Succession." Quest Mode introduces RPG elements to the already fun formula, including the ability for characters to gain experience points (by defeating enemies and conquering towers) to increase their abilities and use treasure to purchase such items as a fight ring (fight more skillfully) and a mirror ring (shoot reflective shots). There are also floor sections that are slippery, paralyzing, damaging, or otherwise hazardous. For those unfamiliar with *Gauntlet*, the top-down action has players, as a warrior, elf, wizard, or valkyrie, scurrying around labyrinths and dungeon rooms, shooting monsters, grabbing keys to open doors, collecting treasures, drinking potion (for speed, power, and health), and searching for exits. In addition to Arcade and Quest Mode, *Gauntlet IV* adds a one-on-one Battle fighting mode and a Record mode, the latter challenging players to advance faster and more skillfully. The sequel to



Fans of Atari's arcade classic *Gauntlet* (1985) will love *Gauntlet IV*, which adds a Quest Mode.

Gauntlet: The Third Encounter (Lynx). Followed by: *Gauntlet Legends* (arcade, various) and other sequels.

Gemfire

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Gemfire puts players on a quest to reunite seven different gems (each housing a wizard, a sorceress, or a dragon) with a magical crown and free Princess Robyn, who has been put in jail by her father, the evil King Eselred. Using a combination of military and domestic tactics to unite all the provinces of a fantastical land, players must cultivate the land, protect various provinces, trade for food and gold, plunder neighboring provinces, gain the support of the people, expand into other lands, hire creatures to fight wars, recruit an army, and much more. Armies consist of five units: cavalry, infantry (2), archers, and a special unit consisting of mercenaries, monsters, wizards, and sorceresses. Battles are viewed from an angled/overhead perspective, with players selecting from such options as wait, move, command unit, build fence, and retreat. Also released for the NES and Super NES.

General Chaos

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Game Refuge. Action/Strategy, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

This finely crafted game pits brother (General Chaos) against brother (General Havoc) in combat on more than 50 different battlefields. There are four different squads from which to choose (Assault Team, Commandos, Demolition Squad, and Brute Force Troop) and five different weapon types: flamethrowers, machine guns, bazookas, grenades, and dynamite. The aforementioned ground forces are controlled directly or through a cursor system. For gamers not ready to wage a full campaign (Head-to-Head or Side-by-Side cooperative), there's always Boot Camp, which offers training on weapons usage, commando control, medical dispatch, squad movement, and close combat.

Generations Lost

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Pacific Softscape. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

In *Generations Lost*, players control Monobe of the blood of Keptan, a long-haired, smoothly animated, muscular hero who wears a magical power suit equipped with an energy radiator. This special weapon/device can shoot like a gun (including rapid fire) and act as a repelling beam for climbing up or down to otherwise unreachable areas. In addition to shooting and repelling, players will punch, jump (on moving platforms, etc.), swing like Spider-Man (via the repelling beam), turn somersaults, ride elevators, solve puzzles (a prominent aspect of the game), explore jungles, find hidden rooms and secret switches, and use keys to open lockers (which yield shields and other helpful items). Enemies and obstacles include strange birds, electric shocks, hideous monsters, shield-bearing rock throwers, and more. Fans of *Flashback: The Quest for Identity* should enjoy *Generations Lost*.

Genghis Khan II: Clan of the Gray Wolf

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The sequel to *Genghis Khan* for the NES and PC, *Clan of the Gray Wolf* lets players conquer Mongolia as Genghis Khan. Or, gamers can play as one of 12 leaders (such as King John or Philip II) on a conquest to take over the entire known world. To achieve success, players must employ turn-based actions to develop a military (including the promoting and demoting of generals), raise a family, select their successor, choose who will marry their daughter, buy and sell goods, control the population, keep the economy stable, and much more (the harem option was excluded from the U.S. version of the game). There are 16 historical military units to command, including knights, samurai, and elephants. Sandstorms, epidemics, typhoons, and other random events complicate matters. For advice, players can call on such legendary figures as Thomas Aquinas, Marco Polo, and Robin Hood. Also released for the SNES.

George Foreman's KO Boxing

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Beam Software. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Sporting a behind-the-boxer perspective (à la *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!*), *George Foreman's KO Boxing* for the Genesis pits the former Heavyweight Champion against 15 different fictional opponents (compared to 12 in the NES version), each of whom has his own fighting style. George can block, dodge left and right (there is no full movement around the ring), throw left and right crosses and jabs, and execute "superpunches," which are earned by performing the right combinations of successful punches to the opponent. Button-mashing helps players recover from knockdowns, and damage to the boxers (bruises, blood, and swelling) is illustrated by a pair of large portraits. Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, and Game Gear.

Ghostbusters

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega/Compile. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Much different (and, frankly, much more enjoyable) than its more complex computer, NES, and SMS counterparts, *Ghostbusters* for the Genesis is a video game sequel of sorts to Columbia's 1984 horror/comedy film. Players guide a big-headed version of Peter (strong, but slow), Egon (fast, but weak), or Raymond (average in both areas) through six levels (Home Sweet Home, Apartment, Woody House, High-Rise Building, Castle, and Deep Hole), jumping over hazards and using bombs and a positronic ion blaster (which can fire in eight directions) to destroy a variety of ghosts, including bosses, mini-bosses, and a very impressive looking Stay Puft Marshmallow Man. Additional weapons to purchase include bubble projectile, phaser shell, three-way shot, explosives, barriers (for invincibility), and a special protective suit.

Ghouls'n Ghosts

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1989.

A gorgeous looking and sounding game, *Ghouls'n Ghosts* is an excellent port of Capcom's 1988 arcade classic. Players guide a brave young knight named Arthur as he runs and jumps along the ground in five spooky locales (a graveyard, a decaying village, a haunted mountain, a crystal forest, and a burning town), hurling lances at demons, zombies, skeletons, vultures, werewolves, ghouls, ghosts, and other monsters. The end of each level contains a gateway guarded by a fearsome boss. By popping open chests, players can find additional armor and such weapons as an axe, a super sword, a dagger, a discus, and fire water. The game has a gothic setting and is extremely difficult (jumping can be a bit awkward since you can't reverse direction in midair), but there is some humor involved, such as Arthur getting reduced to his boxers when he gets hit, and when an old wizard turns him into a baby or a duck. Unlike the Master System version, which contains doors to enter, the Genesis rendition of *Ghouls'n Ghosts* doesn't add any platform-specific features. The sequel to *Ghosts 'N Goblins* (arcade, NES), *Ghouls'n Ghosts* was followed by *Super Ghouls'n Ghosts* (SNES, GBA).

G-LOC: Air Battle

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Probe Software. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1992.

In *G-LOC: Air Battle*, players must fly a plane through various missions (all of which feel similar) over land and sea, firing an M40-A1 Vulcan gun and Dragonfly missiles at a set number of planes or ground defenses within a specified time limit. After each objective is achieved, players must land on an aircraft carrier. Fuel is a factor as well. Upgrades, which are purchased with money earned from landing on the aforementioned aircraft carriers, include heavy bullets, air-to-air missiles, air-to-ground missiles, and three types of armor: heavy, light, and medium. Two viewpoints are featured: inside the cockpit and from behind the plane. The spinning, banking, rapid-fire action is fairly steady, evoking *After Burner II* to a large degree, though a sense of redundancy does set in pretty quickly. Sega's arcade original (1990),

which had better graphics, but no money for players to earn, came in three different cabinets, including a deluxe sit-down version that tilts and rotates (à la *After Burner*). Also released for the Game Gear.

GODS

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Graftgold. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

As Hercules, players must journey through 12 worlds (comprised of City, Temple, Labyrinth, and Underworld), battling monsters, solving puzzles, pulling levers, moving blocks, utilizing teleports, exploring hidden rooms, avoiding traps, climbing ladders, discovering clues, and more. During his decidedly difficult quest for immortality, Hercules can pick up or purchase 15 different weapons and 20 different potions, but he can only carry three at a time. Enemy A.I. is strong, though, ironically, certain creatures can be tricked into helping Hercules. The game runs a bit faster than the original 1991 Bitmap Brothers computer version, but Hercules still moves at a measured pace. Also released for the SNES.

Golden Axe

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

A sword-and-sorcery take on the type of urban beat-'em-up game established by such street brawlers as *Double Dragon* and *Bad Dudes*, *Golden Axe* is a popular title and an excellent port of Sega's 1989 arcade game, adding a couple of extra levels, a Beginner mode, and a Duel fighting mode. Gamers play as one of three distinctive characters: Tyris-Flare the Amazon (sword, fire magic), Gilius-Thunderhead the Dwarf (axe, lightning magic), or Ax-Battler the Barbarian (sword, volcano magic), each of whom stabs, slices, pokes, throws, kicks, body slams, and/or head-butts such enemies as Death Adder's soldiers, Lizard Women, and Skeleton Swordsmen. There are broken floors and perilous pits to jump over, but the focus is on combat. Riding fire-breathing and tail-whipping Bizzarian beasts up the

ante on the action (and on the fun factor), and players can hit elves that run by, making them drop strength bars (for health) and magic pots (which make magic attacks progressively stronger). The game features seven nicely illustrated, musically adept, fun-filled stages: In the Woods, Turtle Village, Crossing from Turtle Island to the Mainland, To Eagle Island, From Eagle Island to the Palace, The Palace Gates, and The Dungeon. Far superior to the one-player Master System version.

Golden Axe II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Golden Axe II adheres closely to the formula of the first game, but does add some new features, including the ability for players to ride an airborne dragon (who breathes fire) and a changed magic system that lets players tap the button to use a small percentage of magic instead of always having to use all of it at once. In addition, wizards bring magic books (as opposed to elves bringing magic pots), and the Dwarf's lightning magic has been switched to tornadoes while the Barbarian now unleashes swirling stones instead of volcanoes. The Amazon still uses fire magic, but the animations have been changed. Also, there are now three different Bizzarians to ride, including a green dragon that kicks with its hind legs. Some may bellyache that *Golden Axe II* is too similar to the original, but at least it's fun. Followed by: *Golden Axe III*, which was originally only released in Japan (for the Mega Drive), but was later made available in the U.S. via the *Sega Genesis Collection* (PS2, PSP) and *Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection* (PS3, Xbox 360). Other follow-ups include: *Golden Axe Warrior* (SMS), *Ax Battler: A Legend of Golden Axe* (GG), *Golden Axe: Return of Death Adder* (arcade), *Golden Axe: The Duel* (arcade, Saturn), and *Golden Axe: Beast Rider* (PS3, Xbox 360).

Goofy's Hysterical History Tour

Publisher: Absolute Entertainment. Developer: Disney Software/Imagineering. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Despite its title, *Goofy's Hysterical History Tour* is not an educational game. Rather, it's a flawed platformer in which gamers control buck-toothed Disney dog Goofy as he maneuvers about Ludwig von Drake's History Museum, trying to clean it up. This consists of walking goofily along, jumping on enemies and on such platforms as clouds, kites, and boats. Goofy is equipped with an ill-advised, clumsy-to-control Extend-O-Glove, which is used to throw balls, go up to higher areas, and grab onto catch-holds to swing over gaps. The glove is also used for hitting blocks and enemies (including Gunslinger Pete in the western era), the latter of which take several hits to eliminate. Goofy also rides a wheel (in the prehistoric era), catapults himself, slides down in-

clines, and performs a few other maneuvers. The foreground graphics are fine, but backgrounds are sparse. Goofy has limited voice effects, including his patented "A-Hyuck." The cartoon setting and license betray the cart's frustrating gameplay.

Granada

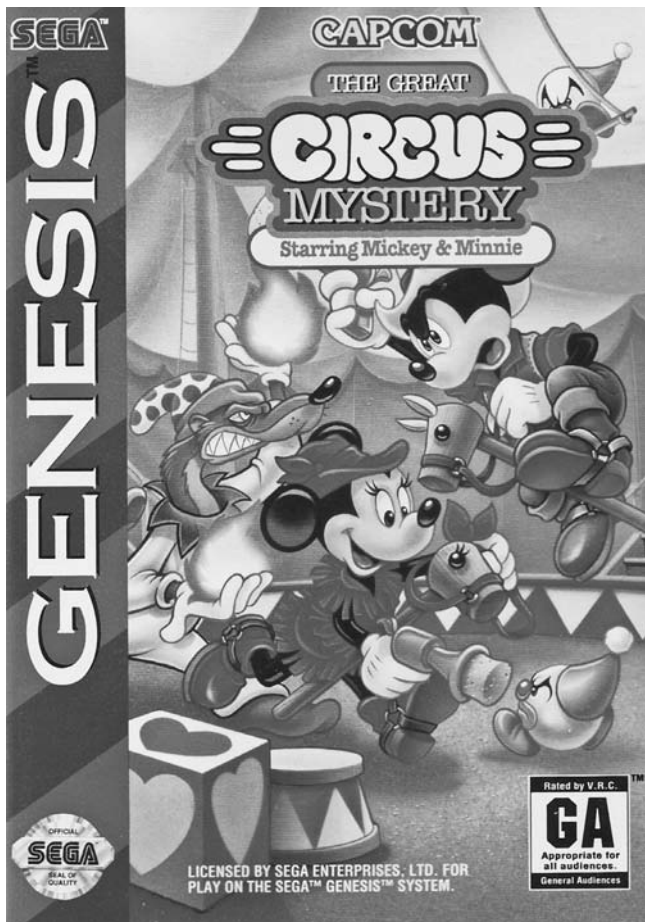
Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

In *Granada*, players control a small, but powerful Hypertek-Cannon Tank, which is equipped with a cannon, shields, radar, blast discharges, and the ability to equip multi-directional bullets, long-range homing missiles, and other supplemental weaponry. To clear each level, players must destroy all the enemies and targets, including bosses. There are four such mission-based levels: the Tabora district; the giant flying battleship Astarsha; the Shuba district (denoted by highways as tall as 1,000 feet); and the Kilomoto district (where battles rage into the night). Fans of *Assault* (arcade, 1988) will love this underappreciated game.

The Great Circus Mystery Starring Mickey & Minnie

Publisher: Capcom. Developer: Capcom. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *The Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse* (SNES), *The Great Circus Mystery* stars Mickey and Minnie Mouse as they cooperate (in two-player mode) to work their way through six cute levels: the Haunted Circus, the Jungle, the Haunted House, the Caves, the Frozen Plains, and the Baron's Castle, each with thematic music to match. In addition to the two-player coop mode, what sets the



In *The Great Circus Mystery*, two players cooperate: one as Mickey, the other as Minnie.

game apart are different costumes Minnie and Mickey can wear that give them different abilities, including a sweeper outfit (suck in enemies and coins), a safari getup (climb walls, swing from hooks), and cowboy clothes (bounce on wooden horse, fire corks out of a pop gun). The levels are short and fairly easy (including the bosses), but they are diverse and entertaining as players jump on enemies, scale trees, leap across hazards, hop on skeleton (and other) platforms, collect coins hidden in blocks, purchase extra lives and outfit upgrades in Clarabelle Cow's shop, and much more. While not quite on the level with *Castle of Illusion* or *Mickey Mania*, *The Great Circus Mystery* is nevertheless a fine (not to mention fun) game. Also released for the SNES. Released for the GBA as *Disney's Magical Quest 2 Starring Mickey & Minnie*. Followed by: *Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald* (GBA).

The Great Waldo Search

Publisher: THQ. Developer: Radiance Software. Action Puzzle/Educational/General, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on the popular series of search-and-find picture books (which began with *Where's Waldo* in 1987), *The Great Waldo Search* has players guiding a magnifying glass around five different side-scrolling worlds: Land of the Gargantuas, Kingdom of the Carpet Fliers, Water Monks vs. Fire Druids, Enchanted Underground, and Land of the Waldos. In each level, the objective is to find a magic scroll and Waldo himself, who appears in a different place each time the game is played. Finding Waldo's dog Woof unlocks a bonus round in which players guide the magic carpet-riding pup over a cityscape. Other items to search for include point markers, clocks (for extra time), and special clocks (for freezing the standard action and giving players bonus items to look for). The game lacks the cool musical intro of the NES version, but has more animation. Also released for the SNES.

Greatest Heavyweights

Publisher: Sega. Developer: ACME Interactive. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The sequel to the very similar *Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing*, *Greatest Heavyweights* stars Mr. Holyfield, plus seven other heavyweight legends: Muhammad Ali, Jack Dempsey, Joe Frazier, Larry Holmes, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, and Floyd Patterson. Modes of play include: Exhibition, Tournament, and Career, the latter of which lets gamers guide a player-created boxer through the ranks, staving off opponents and early retirement (from losing too many bouts). Improvements over "*Real Deal*" *Boxing* include faster gameplay, superior animation, more taunts, a replay feature, and six-button controller support. The announcer for the game sounds like Michael "Let's get ready to rumble!" Buffer.

Greendog: The Beached Surfer Dude!

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Interactive Designs. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

In this underappreciated adventure, the titular blonde surfer gets knocked off his board and is flummoxed by an Aztec curse, driving the denizens of an island paradise insane. To help Greendog thwart the crazed parrots, piranhas, crabs, and tourists (and otherwise make it through the 12 tropical levels), he's equipped with a boomerang-like disc and the ability to hitch rides on flying creatures. He can also swing on vines and jump over such obstacles as spikes and sinking platforms. Loose controls hinder the action to some degree, but the game remains a relaxing pleasure. Also released for the Game Gear.

Grind Stormer

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

Though playable (and even somewhat enjoyable), the Genesis version of *Grind Stormer* suffers from flickering and slowdown not found in Toaplan's 1993 arcade game of the same name. In addition, the Genesis port has a flattened, less polished look. Gameplay is of the typical vertical scrolling shooter variety, with players flying up the screen, using rapid fire, bombs (which also provide shielding), search pods (which lock onto their targets), missiles, and other weapons to blow away scores of less-

than-memorable (if otherworldly) enemies, including bosses. The screen frequently gets extremely busy, causing potential confusion, but the game is beatable.

Growl

Publisher: Taito. Developer: ITL. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1991.

Growl for the Genesis has a disturbing thematic concept that proposes that it's okay to kill hundreds of people to save endangered species. It is a port of Taito's 1990 arcade curiosity, but that game has outlandish voice effects to give it more of a tongue-in-cheek type of vibe (the Genesis version is also missing the multi-player simultaneous action and the platforming level). Gamers guide an adventure "hero" through seven areas (including Down

on the Docks, Cargo of Death, Jungle Battle, and Daggers in the Dark), punching and kicking members of an animal poaching and smuggling ring. Barrels, crates, and defeated enemies contain weapons players can pick up and use, including a knife, a sword, an iron bar, a whip, a pistol, an AK-47, and a rocket launcher. Throwable objects, such as rocks and exploding powder kegs, are available as well. There are four playable characters, each with character-specific special moves. Part *Indiana Jones*, part *Double Dragon*, part militant animal rights activism, *Growl* is a darkly amusing entry in the Genesis library.

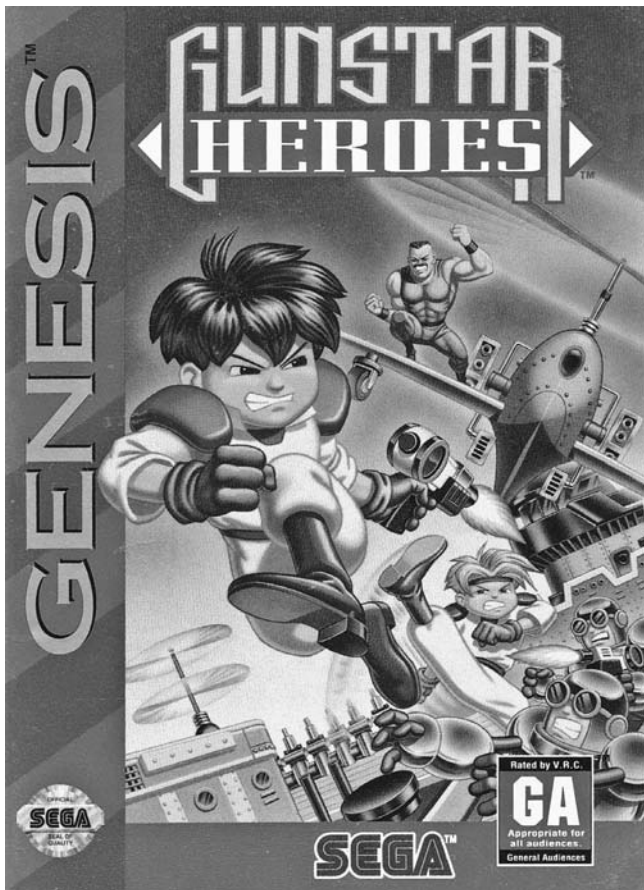
Gunstar Heroes

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Treasure. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A favorite title among collectors and hardcore gamers, *Gunstar Heroes* is a fast, frantically paced shooter in the mold of *Contra*, but with anime-style visuals and a personality all its own. Players guide Gunstar Red (shoots while moving) or Gunstar Blue (stops to shoot) through four brutal (if brief) levels (including mining cart and spaceship stages), using plasma energy, lightning, laser darts, and fire to blow away a constant barrage of enemies, including insanely original bosses. Combining weaponry (two at a time) provides extra firepower. In addition to running, jumping and shooting, the heroes can throw enemies, deliver slide tackles, and more. This phenomenal, incredibly entertaining shooter which, amusingly enough, was originally packaged with a Fruit Roll-Ups sample, was followed by: *Gunstar Super Heroes* (GBA).

Hard Drivin'

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Sterling Silver Software. Sports Car Racing, 1 player. 1990.



A *Contra*-style platform shooter with anime-influenced graphics, *Gunstar Heroes* is a favorite among hardcore Genesis fans.

Based on Atari Games' 1989 racing simulation, which featured 3D polygonal graphics (a rarity for the time) and a steering wheel augmented with force-feedback, *Hard Drivin'* for the Genesis suffers from a reduction in frame rate, sluggish gameplay, and boxy, polygonal visuals that haven't aged well. The viewpoint is from inside a Ferrari, but a large display panel annoyingly takes up 1/3 of the screen. Two tracks are available: a Speed Track and a Stunt Track, the latter of which contains ramps, high-banked curves, an open drawbridge, and other obstacles. Also released for the Lynx. Followed by: *Race Drivin'* (Genesis, GB, SNES, arcade).

Hardball!

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Accolade. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Based on the popular computer series (which began in 1985), *Hardball!* lacks MLB and MLBPA licensing, but it does feature 26 different teams from real Major League cities. Players can select line-ups, make substitutions, play a seven-game World Series (saved via passwords), practice in a batting cage, and use a corked bat. Veteran umpire Eddie Montague calls the game via digitized speech. The view is from behind the pitcher. *Hardball!*, which includes such baseball staples as errors, stolen bases, and double plays, was the first 8-meg sports game for the Genesis. Box art by the great fantasy painter Boris Vallejo. Since *Hardball II* was only released for computers, the Genesis sequel to this game is *Al Michaels Announces Hardball III*.

Hardball '94

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: MindSpan Technologies. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Al Michaels Announces Hardball III*, *Hardball '94* drops Al Michaels, but adds MLBPA licensing, meaning 700 real Major League Baseball players are featured (each pictured on his own baseball card). Other additions to the series include 28 authentic ballparks, 1994 division/league realignment,

and a 162-game season (with exhibition, all-star, post-season, and world championship play). Gamers can also save stats for every player (via battery backup), save instant replays (to create a personal highlight reel), save seasonal progress, and track league leaders in more than 20 categories. A player editor lets gamers modify player stats, attributes, batting averages, and pitch selections. Other features include: two viewpoints (behind the batter, behind the pitcher), batting cage practice, and a Home Run Derby. Once again, a menu system is used for selecting types of pitches and swings.

Hardball '95

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Cygnus Multimedia Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Hardball '95 is similar to *Hardball '94*, but it does offer the requisite upgrades, including better animation and graphics, smarter computer A.I. (making for a more challenging game), and the return of the Emmy award-winning play-by-play announcer from *Al Michaels Announces Hardball III* (Michaels is more verbose and more articulate this time around). Other features include: player customization, stats and seasonal play saved to battery, a coach-only mode, batting cage practice, a Home Run Derby, 700 real Major Leaguers, and more. Regrettably, as in previous games in the series, the screen does not scroll when the ball is hit into play, giving players a distant view when fielding. Released for the PlayStation as *Hardball 5*. Followed by: *Hardball 99* (PSX). (*Hardball 6* only appeared on computers).

Haunting Starring Polterguy

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: EA Creative Development Group. Action/Adventure, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1993.

Haunting Starring Polterguy has players using couches, goldfish, kitchen knives, and other common items to scare the Sardini family out of four different mansions. The game boasts more than 400 such objects, each of which can be possessed and turned into something funny, gross, or scary. For example, a

steak can be transformed into a bloody head while a band saw can be made to fly like crazy. Ecto Beasts roam the mansions, but these can be kicked away. An angled/overhead map is used to find the Sardinis, and then the action switches to a $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective. Although redundant and brief, *Haunting* is an innovative and amusing game.

Head-On Soccer

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: U.S. Gold. Sports/Soccer, 1–8 players (simultaneous). 1995.

A fast, arcade-style game, *Head-On Soccer* features a 28-team World Tournament comprised of squads from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe (there are 50 teams total). As the tournament progresses, gamers can add star players to their roster. Each star player can cross and back-heel the ball, and each has a special ability, such as latching onto an opposing player, making more accurate passes, jumping with the ball tucked between his feet, or kicking harder toward the goal. Those not wanted to commit to a tournament can play Exhibition mode. Other features include: replays, penalty kicks, headers, fouls (one mode of play makes fouls rare, meaning players can be rough), slide tackles, free kicks, three difficulty levels, and varying field conditions (wet grass, rock, and sand). The action is viewed from an isometric perspective. Also released for the SNES.

Heavy Nova

Publisher: Micronet. Developer: Holocronet. Side-Scrolling Combat/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Heavy Nova begins with combat/platforming action, in which the player's slow, unresponsive robot must walk, jump,

jet-pack, and fight its way through lasers, falling rocks, and droids. When the cyborg protagonist reaches a boss, the game switches to a non-scrolling slugfest of sluggish punches and kicks. The two-player mode is fighting only. Dark graphics, a low frame rate, and annoying sound effects complete this awful package, which contains a telling misspelling on the back of its hyperbolically misleading box: "Amazinly Exciting."

Hellfire

Publisher: Seismic. Developer: NCS/Toaplan. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Regrettably, *Hellfire* for the Genesis lacks the two-player simultaneous mode of its coin-



While not as well known as such games as *Thunder Force II*, *Gradius*, and *R-Type*, *Hellfire* is a fantastic side-scrolling shooter.

op counterpart, which Toaplan released in 1989. Otherwise, this is an excellent hardcore shooter (not to mention an excellent port). Players pilot the titular ship from left to right, blasting hostile enemy spacecraft (which attack from all directions) unleashed by the vaunted Super Mech. The shooting action is intense and challenging, but what sets the game apart is the ability for players—with a simple press of the B button—to switch weaponry on the fly: straight ahead, straight back, up/down, and four-way diagonal. Switching weapons quickly and strategically while enemies crowd the screen is a tactic experienced players will thoroughly enjoy. Configure the game on Easy and with rapid fire turned on and have yourself a *Hellfire* of a good time. Just be sure to grab shields and power-ups whenever possible.

Herzog Zwei

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Technosoft. Real-Time Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

Herzog Zwei is a true cult classic and a hard game to find. Those lucky enough to play it must revolt against a brutal dictator named Herzog Eins. This involves engaging in a series of battles across eight different territories marked by a variety of environments, such as ice, caves, abandoned factories, deserts, and volcanoes. The frantic, top-down view action has players piloting an attack jet, commanding ground troops, defending outposts, transporting armies to strategic areas of the battlefield, and building armies of tanks, supply trucks, motorcycles, robot infantrymen, cannons, and boats. In the thoroughly engaging two-player split-screen mode, the objective is to become Supreme Commander of the world.

High Seas Havoc

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

A poor man's *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *High Seas Havoc* puts players in the role of a purple pirate seal running through five nicely rendered, though commonplace levels (a factory, caverns, an icy mountain, and an ocean floor), jumping on top of bats, fish, sword-wielding

dogs, and other enemies. Despite his status as a pirate, Havoc does not own a sword—his attacks are limited to the aforementioned jumps, an ineffective rolling maneuver, and a slashing attack in the middle of jumps. The game is short on secrets and surprises, but there are treasure chests to open, gems to gather, and boots for extra running speed. A colorful, mildly enjoyable game.

Hit the Ice

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Aisystem Tokyo. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on Williams' 1990 arcade game (which has better voice effects), *Hit the Ice* is a chaotic game of three-on-three hockey. The players are big, cartoonish, and colorful, and gamers can perform such traditional moves as passes, slap shots, and checks, the latter of which play a big role in the game. Less traditional are super shots, which are so powerful that they knock down the goalie. There are few rules, and brawls frequently break out, emphasizing the arcade-style nature of the gameplay (*Hit the Ice* is sort of the hockey version of *Arch Rivals* or *NBA Jam*, but it's not as good as either of those titles). The losing fighter's team skates slower for a short time. Gamers can play against each other or team up to battle the computer. Exhibition and Championship play are available. A vocal, highly animated crowd looks on, and the scraping noise of the skates grinding on the ice gets old in a hurry. If a player gets behind by five points, he can imbibe a power drink that temporarily enhances his skating and shooting ability (this drink cost money in the arcade version). Also released for the SNES, TurboGrafx (enhanced with four-player action and Shot Race mode), and Game Boy (enhanced with Shot Race mode).

Home Alone

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Brian A. Rice Inc. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

As in the NES and Super NES versions, *Home Alone* for the Genesis has Kevin setting traps for bad guys Harry and Marv. However,

the Genesis game incorporates sledding action, in which Kevin cruises around the snowy neighborhood, retrieving useful items. In addition, the Genesis rendition features five different houses: mansion, ultra modern, old, colonial mansion, and country. Weapons, which include a coal rifle, a snowball bazooka, a sonic wave gun, and more, are built by acquiring such parts as hair dryers, snowballs, rope, and batteries. The game ends when the crooks have fully looted all five houses. Based on the popular 1990 film starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, and Daniel Stern. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear.

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

A solid video game representation of the 1992 feature film, *Home Alone 2* finds Kevin McCallister in New York City all by himself. Actually, “Wet Bandits” Harry and Marv are in New York as well, and they are out for revenge. Kevin runs, jumps, ducks, climbs, and slides through eight levels: Upper Airport, Lower Airport, New York by Day, Duncan’s Toy Chest, New York by Night, Uncle’s Apartment, The Pipes (an underground maze), and The Park, each of which contains such items as pizza, milk cartons, and water bottles to restore his health and gifts for scoring extra points. Kevin also scores points by injuring and defeating enemies (businessmen with lethal luggage, grocers, cats, toys, and the like), including Harry and Marv. Most of the levels have six different flashing parts Kevin can find and use to build two different weapons, such as a slingshot and an ice cream cannon. When he doesn’t have a constructed weapon, Kevin can use smaller weapons like baseballs and footballs. As the game progresses, Harry and Marv get smarter and learn such techniques as throwing snowballs and climbing ladders. Different than the Game Boy, NES, and SNES versions.

Hook

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

Based on Steven Spielberg’s 1991 feature film, which starred Dustin Hoffman, Robin Williams, and Julia Roberts, *Hook* for the Genesis puts players in the role of Peter Pan, who must run, jump, fly (thanks to Tinker Bell’s pixie dust), and swim through forests, caves, lagoons, icy regions, a pirate ship, and other locales, using a dagger and a sword (which can shoot star balls) to battle pirates, snakes, tigers, sea dogs, and other enemies (including Rufio and Captain Hook). The game has high production values, but is plagued by slow, uneven gameplay. Irem’s 1992 arcade original boasts four-player simultaneous action. Also released for the GB, GG, NES, SNES, and Sega CD, the latter featuring digitized scenes from the film, CD-quality music from the movie soundtrack, and “never-before-seen” computer images of Hook’s ship.

The Humans

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Imagitec Design. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1992.

Obviously inspired by *Lemmings*, *The Humans* has players trying to help prehistoric man evolve and make it safely through more than 80 puzzling — and at times frustrating — levels. In each level, players are allotted a certain number of humans to perform a specific task, such as leading a human to an object or guiding a group of humans from one point to another. The view is from the side, with ladders, platforms, cliffs, spikes, and other types of terrain and infrastructure to traverse. Players must frequently switch control from human to human in order to progress, and the humans must cooperate to achieve their goals, such as throwing objects to one another or acting as a human ladder. Players should try to finish each level with as many humans intact as possible, but it is sometimes necessary to sacrifice a human to a witch doctor in order to obtain a specific tool. Fans of *The Lost Vikings* should enjoy *The Humans*. Also released for the Game Boy. Remade for the DS as *The Humans: Meet the Ancestors!*

IMG International Tour Tennis

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High

Score Productions. Sports/Tennis, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A rare example of a failed Electronic Arts sports game, *IMG International Tour Tennis* is loaded with realistic features: 32 tennis pros (including Bjorn Borg and Ivan Lendl); 16 international tournaments; four-player doubles action; four different court surfaces (grass, clay, hard, and indoor); a good variety of shots (drop, lob, soft and hard slice, light and hard topspin); tips from coaching legend Vic Braden; and, amusingly enough, the ability to argue calls. Unfortunately, the computer AI is inconsistent, and the controls are dodgy. When chasing a ball, it's tough to time the hit (or get there soon enough) since the onscreen player must stop and go through all the motions of the shot. For a much better tennis game of the era, try *Super Tennis* for the SNES.

The Immortal

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Sandcastle Productions. Isometric Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

A stunning port of Will Harvey's groundbreaking computer game (1990), *The Immortal* is a perplexing adventure through the 50-chamber Labyrinth of Eternity. Gameplay involves obtaining items (magic dust, amulets, gas bombs, shrinking potion, etc.), reading maps, riding a magic carpet, placing gems in the correct holes, battling monsters, avoiding pits in floors, and much more. The trial-and-error action will frustrate some, but tricky puzzles, full-screen combat (dodge left, dodge right, go in for the kill), and gruesome death animations (some of which are Genesis exclusives) will fill hardier gamers with the need to proceed. Also released for the NES.

The Incredible Crash Dummies

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Gray Matter Interactive. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

An evil crash dummy named Junkman has kidnapped Dr. Zub in order to drain his memory banks and steal the top secret design for the TORSO-9000, which would make Junkman virtually indestructible. Enter Slick,

a brave and friendly crash dummy that players control. To battle the various junkbots and other enemies populating the game, Slick can jump on them. He can also throw wrenches, run left and right, duck, skid, jump, and grab air bags (which enable him to float) and lighting bolts (for super speed). Obstacles to negotiate through the game's 16 stages (comprising a junkyard, a crash test center, a construction site, and a military testing zone) include barbed wire, circular saws, oil slicks, crash cycles, and more. Getting hit by an enemy or obstacle makes Slick lose a limb, but he can reattach the last limb lost with a screwdriver. Bonus stages let Slick use a tank, a crash car, or other such vehicle to jump over obstacles and crash into a wall or destroy a turbo-boosted bulldozer. This humor-tinged, fairly entertaining platformer was also released for the SNES. Much different than the Game Boy, Game Gear, and NES versions.

The Incredible Hulk

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Probe Software. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1994.

The Incredible Hulk stars a weakened, watered-down version of the popular Marvel comic book character. The Jade Giant is nicely rendered, but he walks slowly, jumps pitifully (compared to his comic book counterpart), and punches redundantly through five levels of ho-hum action: City & Construction Site, Tyrannus' Labyrinth, Leader's Fortress, The Leader's Interior, and Final Confrontation. Hulk can grab and throw enemies (including robots, Romans, lizards, and slugs) and items (including jeeps, pillars, and phone booths), and he can transform into Super Hulk, who has ceiling smash, sonic clap, foot mash, and double punch capabilities. He can even regress to his alter-ego, Bruce Banner, who explores areas not accessible to the Hulk. Comic book-based bosses include Leader, Tyrannus, Rhino, Absorbing Man, and Abomination. Unfortunately, none of these elements make the game any good.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex

Design Studios. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

Based on Steven Spielberg's 1989 feature film (and on the 1989 computer game), *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* for the Genesis is similar to UBI Soft's NES rendition (complete with poor controls, inept gameplay, and short-range punching), but has more colorfully detailed graphics. Also, Indy can now ride a mine cart and use his whip to swing across chasms. After selecting from two difficulty levels, players guide Indy as he runs, jumps, climbs, punches, and whips his way through catacombs and a castle, atop a moving train, and in other areas where bad guys like to hang out. Indy can be hurt by falling too far and by bumping his head, and cheap hits are plentiful (including falling stalactites), making the game difficult to beat.

Insector X

Publisher: Sage's Creation. Developer: Hot-B. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Boasting solid shooting action and lushly illustrated levels (Desert, Plateau, City, Jungle, and Their Empire), *Insector X* for the Genesis is similar to Taito's arcade original (1989), but with a number of obvious differences, including a more serious tone, as evidenced by the grim bosses and by the jetpack-wearing protagonist, who is more sci-fi and less cartoonish. Both versions offer special weapons (bombs and the like), but the Genesis game lets players stock two at a time. Gameplay is fairly standard (if solidly entertaining), with players blasting their way through scores of mechanized insects. One-hit deaths combined with swarming enemies make *Insector X*, like so many shooters of the era, plenty challenging.

Instruments of Chaos Starring Young Indiana Jones

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Brian A. Rice, Inc./Waterman Design. Adventure/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the television series *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* (1992–1996), *Instruments of Chaos* puts players in the role of Young Indiana Jones, an agent of Belgian Intelligence

armed with a whip, a pistol, and grenades. On a quest to stop the Germans from building a Doomsday Zeppelin, Indy must travel through five locations (India, Egypt, Tibet, London, and Germany), jumping on platforms (mountains, buildings, and the like), braving harsh weather (including sand and lightning storms), and using his weapons to solve puzzles and battle monkeys, snakes, vultures, Egyptian guards, Tibetan monks, crazed construction workers, and temple priests. The whip is slow and ineffectual, and enemies bounce Indy around like a soccer ball, causing sheer frustration. Platforming is uneven (fish sometimes jump up and knock Indy into deadly water quicker than the player can react, for example), and the gameplay in general is hopelessly broken. Visually, the game holds up pretty well, but only Genesis completists and hardcore Indiana Jones fans need apply.

Ishido: The Way of Stones

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade. Board Game/Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

Originally released for Macintosh computers, *Ishido* is a strategy-intensive puzzle game similar to *Shanghai*. Players are given a pouch of 72 randomly sequenced stones. Each stone has two identifying attributes: a color and a symbol. The objective is to play all the stones on a 96-square board by creating one-, two-, and three-way matches (vertically and horizontally, but never diagonally). This gets increasingly difficult as the board gets crowded. If a player pulls off a four-way match, he or she will earn double points for all subsequent matches. The cartridge only works with the original Genesis model.

Izzy's Quest for the Olympic Rings

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Alexandria. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

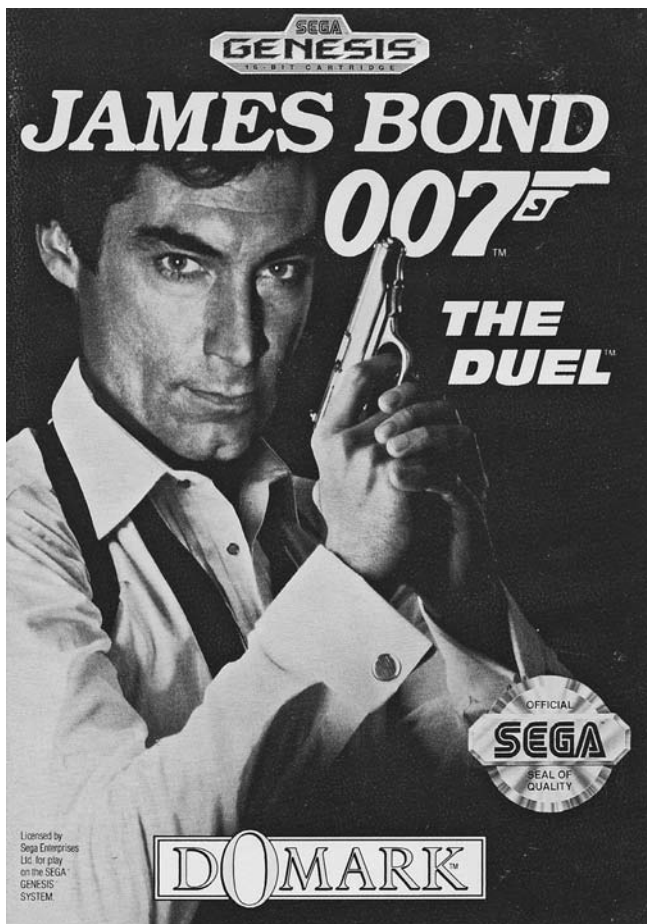
Starring the official mascot of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, *Izzy's Quest* has players guiding a little blue creature through 10 levels of Torch World (including grassy hills with Greek buildings, a lava world, and outer space), searching for the five Olympic rings. The rich, colorful backgrounds are striking

with their preponderance of purples, blues, pinks, and greens. *Izzy's Quest* plays like a sluggish *Sonic the Hedgehog* as Izzy runs and jumps on platforms and spin-jumps to defeat enemies (long jumps leave Izzy vulnerable to getting hurt if he lands on an enemy). More original is the fact that Izzy can morph into eight different characters, including a glider, an archer, a swordsman, a javelin thrower, and a baseball player. In addition, there are two types of bonus stages: a vertical scrolling platformer and a vertical vehicle racer/shooter. *Izzy's Quest* experiences slowdown when the title character jumps, which is kind of odd, but it's a playable platformer that fans of the genre will appreciate. Also released for the SNES.

Jack Nicklaus' Power Challenge Golf

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Microsmiths. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1993.

Despite tons of features, *Power Challenge Golf* is a poor representation of the popular sport, thanks in part to subpar graphics and long draw-in times (switching aim while putting takes seemingly forever). Gamers can create up to eight golfers (men and women) to form a club, or select from computer golfers that can be edited in terms of skill level, swing style, accuracy, distance percentages, and shot tendencies (straight, draw, or fade). Jack Nicklaus is a tough opponent, but players can hit longer drives than "The Golden Bear." Five game modes are available: Stroke, Skins, Tournament Play, Driving Range, and Putting Green, along with three courses: Sherwood Country Club, English Turn Golf & Country Club, and Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey, site of the 1993 U.S. Open. Other features include: instant replays, battery backup, player stats, full swing and punch shots, wind resistance, a leader board, an auto caddy, tips from Jack, and more. Nicklaus appeared in numerous other games, including *Jack Nicklaus Golf* (GB, SNES) and *Jack Nicklaus' Turbo Golf* (TG).



Timothy Dalton as James Bond graces the cover of this mediocre platform shooter.

James Bond 007: The Duel

Publisher: Domark. Developer: The Kremlin/Krisalis Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

The only James Bond game for the Genesis, *The Duel* evokes Namco's *Rolling Thunder* series, but it's not as good or as popular. Players control the Timothy Dalton version of 007 as he shoots bad guys (including Jaws and Oddjob), climbs up and down ladders, jumps on platforms, uses grenades, ducks into alcoves, disarms bombs, rescues hostages, and searches for the exit to each

labyrinthine level. Areas to explore include: a Tanker, a Jungle, a Volcano, and a Space Shuttle. Bond operates slowly, but fans of the franchise will at least enjoy the rousingly familiar theme song.

James “Buster” Douglas Knockout Boxing

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Taito/Toaplan. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

The first Genesis boxing title, *Knockout Boxing* was rushed into production to cash in on Buster’s surprise Heavyweight Championship victory over Mike Tyson. The large, detailed fighters (along with referee) are viewed from the side, and the screen scrolls as they move across the ring. After selecting from five different characters (Douglas, Dynamite Joe, Kim Nang, Fernando Gomez, and the Detroit Kid), players fight the remaining boxers for a chance to battle Iron Head. Players can also select difficulty level (three are available) and number of rounds (up to 12). The Genesis version is far easier to find than its much different Master System counterpart. Adapted from Taito’s *Final Blow* (arcade, 1988).

James Pond: Underwater Agent

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Millennium Interactive/Vectordean. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

A blatant, cartoonish parody of the *James Bond* movie series, *James Pond: Underwater Agent* puts players in the titular role of Double Bubble 7, a big-eyed fish wearing a bowtie and a purple vest. To save the world’s oceans, Pond must: free lobsters from their cages (License to Bubble); use dynamite to blow up a leaky oil platform (A View to a Spill); avoid trappers while leading seals to safety (They Only Live Once); find magic combs to give to mermaids (The Mermaid Who Loved Me); find gold bars to take to a rowboat (The Fish with the Golden Bar); and more. Pond can jump on land, but he’s in water most of the game, shooting bubbles at enemies, dodging bombs and skull potions, finding hidden rooms, and grabbing and using such items as a ray gun, shades (for spot-

ting jellyfish), mushroom teleporters, and a top hat (for lessening damage from enemy attacks). *Underwater Agent* is the first game in the *James Pond* series.

James Pond II — Codename: RoboCod

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Millennium Interactive/Vectordean. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

In *Codename: RoboCod*, James Pond dons a special Robosuit, meaning he spends most of his time in the game out of the water. Pond runs through nine colorful North Pole toy factories, jumping onto platforms, on top of enemies (including caterpillars and wind-up dolls), and over spike-filled pits (and other obstacles). In most levels, Pond must locate and deactivate bombs set by Dr. Maybe. Like Mario, Pond can head-butt certain platforms to make items appear. Far less conventional is a special stretching maneuver that lets Pond grab onto ledges and reach otherwise unattainable bonus items. To help with his mission, Pond can don wings, grab an umbrella (for floating), and commandeer a car, an airplane, and even a bathtub. As hinted at by the North Pole reference above, the game has a Christmas theme, punctuated by a digital rendition of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” Also released for the GG, GBA (as *James Pond: Codename RoboCod*) and SNES (as *Super James Pond*).

James Pond 3: Operation Starfish

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Millennium Interactive/Vectordean. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Operation Starfish eschews the mission-based action of *Underwater Agent* and the stretching gameplay mechanic of *Codename: RoboCod* in favor of straightforward platforming. Gamers guide Special Agent James Pond through more than 100 humor-filled, moon-based stages (with such names as Cheddar Chasm, The Fungal Jungle, The Munster Moors, and The Mocha Mountains), running quickly up and down hills, collecting moons for extra lives, walking upside down, collecting treasure for points, grabbing stars for energy, using dynamite to kill enemies and

remove blockades, employing springs to jump higher, taking flight via a jetpack, using balloons and propellers to float, bumping blocks to reveal items (à la *Super Mario Bros.*), throwing food at enemies, donning x-ray goggles to see hidden boxes, locating and destroying an exit beacon in each level, and much more. Levels are entered via a hub world (à la *Super Mario World*), and sometimes four teacups must be found in a level before the exit beacon can be destroyed. By rescuing the high-jumping Finnius the Frog, he becomes a playable character. This is a long, involved game with lots of items to find and areas to explore.

Jammit

Publisher: Virgin. Developer: GTE ImagiTrek. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Jammit is a side-view, one-on-one game of street basketball that wears its attitude on its proverbial sleeve. After selecting one of three trash-talking players (Slade, Roxy, or Chill) and placing a bet on the game (players begin with \$300 each), hoopsters hit the court, hoping to survive eight rounds in order to play against Judge, the so-called “Court King.” Trash talk is achieved via digitized voice effects (which are hard to discern, unfortunately), and the player graphics were produced, at least in part, through the use of digitized actors. Features and options include: pump up (players can energize when tired); slam cam (close-up view of dunks); sweat (fouls turned off); slams only (nothing but dunks count for points); and frenzy (both players have a basketball). *NBA Jam* fans may enjoy *Jammit* to some degree, but it pales in comparison to that far more popular game. Also released for the SNES and 3DO.

Jennifer Capriati Tennis

Publisher: Renovation. Developer: System Sacom. Sports/Tennis, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

One of the best tennis games of the era, *Jennifer Capriati Tennis* lets gamers play as the titular pro (who won a gold medal in 1992), or as one of 12 other female players (with fictional names) based on stars from the 1991 tour.

Twelve male tennis players are available as well, sporting such names as Baker (Boris Becker), Supras (Pete Sampras) and Sapatie (Gabriela Sabatini). In addition, gamers can create and save (via passwords) their own players. Three modes of play are available: Practice (players can work on their serve); Exhibition (single games); and Tournament (Sydney Open, Paris Open, London Open, and Florida Open). Winning the tournament unlocks 24 new players. Three court surfaces (lawn, hard, and clay) are available. The elevated view is from behind one end of the court, and the screen scrolls a bit to follow the action. Fans of *Super Tennis* for the SNES should enjoy this game.

Jeopardy!

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Park Place Productions. Game Show, 1–3 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Hosted by Alex Trebek himself (through digitized voice and imagery), *Jeopardy!* for the Genesis recreates the popular TV game show quite well (theme music and television studio are also digitized). As play begins, three contestants are shown standing behind podiums (the computer fills in if only one or two humans are playing), and then the view switches to a board showing six different categories. Each category is at the top of a column, with each column containing a series of progressively higher dollar amounts. After a category and dollar amount have been selected, a trivia question is posed, and within a set time limit players must answer the question by guiding a cursor along an alphabet to spell out the word or words. This can get tedious, but what other choice did the programmers have? There are more than 3,500 questions spread over 700+ categories. *Jeopardy!*, *Double Jeopardy!*, and *Final Jeopardy!* are included. Also released for the NES, Sega CD, SNES, CD-i, and other systems.

Jeopardy! Deluxe Edition

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Park Place Productions. Game Show, 1–3 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Jeopardy! Deluxe Edition is similar to *Jeop-*

ardy!, but with more than 3,500 all-new questions in more than 700 categories (art, literature, sports, fine china, architecture, dogs, royalty, and the like). Gamers can play as one of five different characters: two female and three male, each of whom have their own animations. Once again, digitization was used to nice effect, with a photorealistic image of host Alex Trebek spouting such phrases as “You are correct” and “Here are the categories.” Players are given a minute to enter their answers via the control pad (one letter at a time), and non-gamers may find this a bit intimidating (or at least tedious). Overall, thanks to lots of questions and a nice presentation, this is an excellent version of the popular, Merv Griffin-produced game show. Also released for the SNES.

Jeopardy! Sports Edition

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Park Place Productions. Game Show, 1–3 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Jeopardy! Sports Edition is similar to *Jeopardy!* and *Jeopardy! Deluxe Edition*, but this time the 3,500 all-new questions are, like the title suggests, related to the wide world of sports. There are 700 categories, including such brain bogglers as auto racing, baseball equipment, basketball firsts, boxing nicknames, mascots, movies, and swimming strokes. Although not featured on the front cover, a digitized Alex Trebek is on hand to host the proceedings. Amusingly, each of the contestants is outfitted in sports garb. Also released for the SNES, Game Boy, and Game Gear.

Jerry Glanville’s Pigskin Footbrawl

Publisher: RazorSoft. Developer: Developer Resources. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

This is a port of Midway’s *Pigskin 621 AD* coin-op (1990), supplemented by the brand-name recognition of Jerry Glanville (who yells “Let’s kick some butt” via digitized voice effects), former NFL head coach of the Houston Oilers (1986–1989) and Atlanta Falcons (1990–1993). The fun, fast-paced, five-on-five action has as much to do with rugby as it does American football, with players slugging it out

amidst all the running, passing, and kicking. There’s a red team and a blue team, each of which has an armored player that the gamer controls. The game, which has a bloody, brutal (if cartoonish), medieval theme, also includes weaponry (spikes, maces, and the like), field obstacles, and trolls, the latter of which help teams that are getting killed (figuratively in this case) during the second half. There are two fields: a meadow and a coliseum. *Pigskin Footbrawl* is a sequel of sorts to *Arch Rivals: “A Basketbrawl,”* which Bally/Midway released to the arcades in 1989. Two-player mode recommended.

Jewel Master

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

As with countless other side-scrollers, *Jewel Master* features a protagonist who walks, runs, and jumps through various locals (forests, deserts, frozen wastelands, and giant castles) while battling gargoyles, bats, dragons, and other monsters. What sets the game apart are 12 magical rings earned by defeating certain mythical creatures. Each ring contains an elemental power (flames, ice daggers, earthquakes, and the like) that can be combined with other powers to create mystical weapons, giving the arcade-like action a welcome dose of strategy. Quirky enemies (skeletal unicorns, man-faced fish), crisp controls, and 22 different musical scores add to the fun.

Joe & Mac

Publisher: Takara. Developer: Eden Entertainment/Krisalis Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A nice port of Data East’s *Caveman Ninja* coin-op (1991), *Joe & Mac* for the Genesis looks, sounds, and plays about the same as the SNES version, but the player’s shots move a little faster across the screen, there’s more multi-scrolling, and more enemies can appear on-screen at once. Solo players guide Joe through prehistoric platforming action, using an axe (and such power-ups as a flint, a boomerang, fire, and a stone wheel) to battle tyrant triffids, baby pteranodons, electric flying fish, and other

enemies. A second gamer can join in as Mac (who wields a bone weapon) to help or hinder Joe's progress. When battling a boss, the player who hits the boss the most times receives a kiss from rescued cave girls and full energy replenishment (gobbling food also helps restore health). The NES and GB versions lack the two-player mode. The SNES received a sequel in *Joe & Mac 2: Lost in the Tropics*. The arcade sequel to *Caveman Ninja* is called *Joe & Mac Returns*.

Joe Montana Football

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Electronic Arts/Park Place Productions. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

More arcade-like than its closest contemporary (*John Madden Football*), *Joe Montana Football* features 16 fictional teams (denoted by real city names) of varying quality—predictably, San Francisco is a superior squad. There are 24 offensive and 24 defensive plays to choose from, and indecisive players can call on Joe himself to suggest a play. Joe is also on hand with scouting reports, congratulatory comments, and a digitized intro: “Welcome to Joe Montana Football.” The action scrolls vertically, and passing plays provide an unusual first-person view cam of the receivers. Modes of play include Exhibition, Two-Minute Drill, and Sega Bowl, and users can select game length and turn penalties on or off. When a player gets injured, medics take him off the field on a stretcher. Simple gameplay and a troubled release history (Mediagenic dropped the ball on developing the game) epitomize *Joe Montana Football*, which was intended for release in time for Christmas of 1990. Also released for the Master System and Game Gear.

Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software/Western Technologies. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

This sequel to *Joe Montana Football* kicked off Sega's *Sports Talk* series, which was innovative in its use of digitized speech offering continuous play-by-play commentary of the action as it happened on the field. Like its progenitor, *Joe Montana II* lacks NFL licensing

(teams are denoted by city names), but some changes have been made, including the move from vertical to horizontal gameplay and the following additions: instant replays, weather conditions, and Dream Team mode (in which players create their own team). More significantly (at least in terms of technological oomph), the camera zooms in for a closer look after the ball has been passed or handed off. *Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football* has aged poorly, thanks to slippery controls, dodgy passing, generic players, and counterintuitive interfacing, but it deserves its place in history as the first video game with play-by-play commentary. Followed by: *NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana*.

John Madden Football

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Adapted from the popular computer game, *John Madden Football* revolutionized the console industry in terms of gridiron realism and control. Although it lacks NFL and NFLPA licensing (meaning players and team names are fictional), the game boasts 17 teams (each with detailed player ratings), more than 100 plays, inclement field conditions (including snow, mud, and rain), various formations (including shotgun), a special three-window display showing close-ups of the receivers, and more. Unlike most previous football games, *Madden* eschewed the traditional side viewpoint in favor of a behind/above the quarterback perspective. Also released for the 3DO and SNES.

John Madden Football Championship Edition

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Looking Glass Technology/EA Studios. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

John Madden Football Championship Edition is virtually identical to *John Madden Football '93*, but for the following differences: It features 38 championship teams from 1966 through 1991 (as opposed to standard contemporary teams), and it was only available through rental outlets and mail order, making

it much harder to find and more valuable than most other Genesis sports games.

John Madden Football '92

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The follow-up to *John Madden Football*, *John Madden Football '92* enhances the successful formula with instant replays, two-player coop action, new plays (including run & shoot and 3–4 defense), quarterback injuries (complete with on-field ambulance), quarterback substitutions, more audibles, and the ability to overturn pass interference calls. As in the original game, there are more than 100 plays, but this time out there are 28 pro teams, plus the All-Madden Team. The box boasts “smarter opponents” and a “quicker, more aggressive defense,” but the computer is still easy to beat.

John Madden Football '93

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Looking Glass Technology/EA Studios. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The third game in the *Madden* series for the Genesis, *John Madden Football '93* adds a number of new features, including battery backup, QB stop clock plays, a no huddle offense, split-screen play calling, eight greatest-ever teams, two All-Madden Teams (as opposed to one), improved graphics and sounds, and digitized commentary from Madden himself. Once again, the box boasts tougher computer opponents, but the computer is still a pushover. Following this game, the series dropped the “John” in the title (*Madden NFL '94*, for example).

Jordan vs Bird

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Michael Abbot/Jay Zimmermann/Michael Bartlow. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

An upgrade of the 1988 computer game, *Jordan vs Bird: One on One*, *Jordan vs Bird* for the Genesis pits slam dunk maestro Michael Jordan against three-point legend Larry Bird, both of whom took part in the design of the

game. The half-court action is supplemented by a 3-Point Contest (Bird) and a Slam Dunk Contest (Jordan), the latter of which lets players perform three different dunks from a total of 10: Stretch Air, Helicopter, Leapfrog, Hole-in-One, Reverse Jam, Switch-A-Roo, All-Star Slam, Hula-Loop, The Pumper, and Fly S.W.A.T. Unlike the NES rendition (*Jordan vs Bird: One on One*), the Genesis game offers a Simulation mode, which adds fatigue as a factor. Other features include: instant replays, crowd animation, digitized sound, and player stats. *Jordan vs Bird* is a descendant of *Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-On-One* (1984, PC). Also released for the Game Boy (as *Jordan vs Bird: One on One*).

Joshua and the Battle of Jericho

Publisher: Wisdom Tree. Developer: Wisdom Tree. Maze/Maze Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1994.

Joshua and the Battle of Jericho uses the *Crystal Mines* (NES) engine, but is retrofitted with a biblical theme. Players guide Joshua through a series of 100 timed levels, tooting his trumpet (i.e. shooting musical note projectiles) to clear away enemies and obstacles, including Hittite citizens, Achan's sin, pieces of the Jericho wall, and temporary boundaries. Joshua can also drop items on enemies and grab numerous prizes, including Armor of God, God Speed (quicker movement), Breath of God (for freezing enemies), and the Lord's Favor (temporary invincibility). The objective in each level is to collect five questions (the game includes 250 trivia questions based on the book of *Joshua*), gather all the iron, brass, silver, and gold, and then find the exit. Also released for the NES (with digitized speech, but less color). Similar to: *Exodos: Journey to the Promised Land* (Genesis) and *Boulder Dash* (NES, various). Unlicensed.

Judge Dredd

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1995.

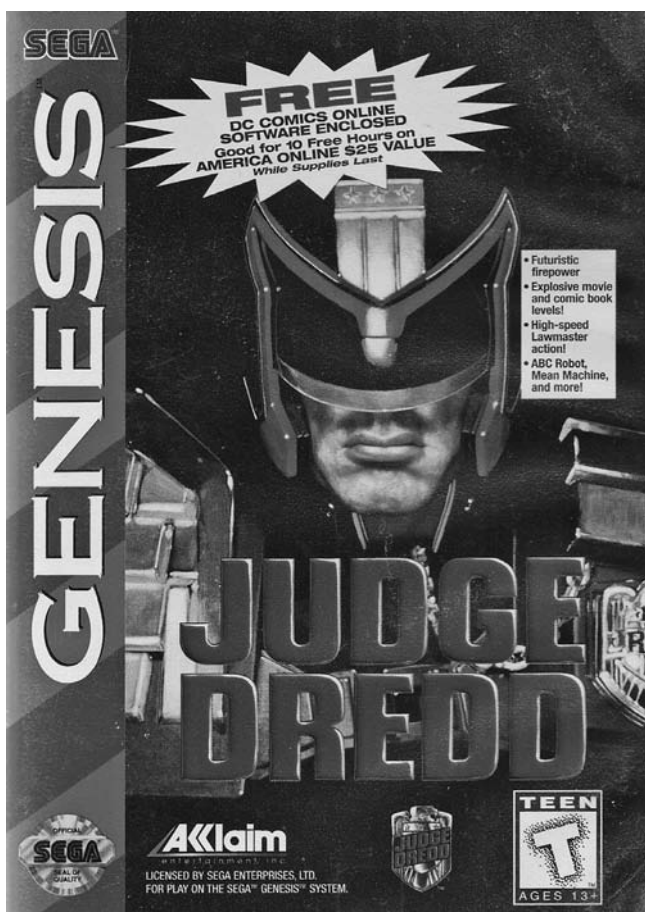
Like its SNES counterpart, *Judge Dredd* for the Genesis is a surprisingly good game with

nice graphics, smooth controls, and plenty of post apocalyptic action. Players guide the titular Lawgiver (played by Sylvester Stallone in the 1995 feature film) as he runs, jumps, crawls, crouches, climbs, and flies (via anti-grav belt) through 12 industrial levels, shooting, punching, kicking, and arresting bad guys along the way. Each level has a primary and secondary objective, such as freeing hostages, activating security systems, or destroying certain objects. British comic book hero Judge Dredd first appeared in 1977 in issue #2 of *2000 AD*.

Junction

Publisher: Micronet. Developer: Konami. Maze/Action Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

Backed by soothing new age-style music, *Junction* has players sliding pieces of a puzzle, similar to those old handheld puzzles where you slide plastic squares. However, instead of creating a picture, the objective is to connect pathways to keep a marble rolling along said path and to the exits. Puzzle pieces—tiles if you will—are marked by curves, straight lines, and inter-sections. Ramps, unmovable pieces, and other obstacles help make the game deviously difficult. If the marble's progress gets blocked, that marble is lost, but players can restart stages, of which there are 50 in all. There are five different backgrounds, including an airplane, but the emphasis is on mind-bending puzzles, not graphics. The ball can be sped up, but the deliberate, brainy, slowly paced action will test the patience of some. Hardcore puzzle fans will eat it up, especially those who enjoy such games as *Pipe Dream* (NES, GB), *Timeball* (TurboGrafx), *Happy Trails and Loco-Motion* (Intellivision), and *Zenji* (Atari 5200, ColecoVision). Also released for the Game Gear.



Based on the 1995 feature film starring Sylvester Stallone in the title role, *Judge Dredd* is one of the better movie-based games of the era.

The Jungle Book

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.
Developer: Eurocom Entertainment Software.
Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Like *Aladdin* before it, *The Jungle Book* has silky smooth animation and delightful platforming action. Players guide the young Indian boy Mowgli as he climbs and swings on vines, jumps on tree branches, and otherwise makes his way through 10 timed, tall, nice looking jungle levels. Players must collect a certain number of gems in each level (a compass helps lead the way), but 15 are required for playing the bonus round. Each area to explore is littered with obstacles and enemies, such as flies, snakes, scorpions (à la *Pitfall!*), crocodiles,

spikes, vampire bats, coconut-throwing monkeys, and/or falling rocks. Unfortunately, blind jumps and water can be lethal, which is annoying. Mowgli can always throw bananas at enemies, but pick-ups allow him to throw double power bananas and boomerang bananas, wield a pea shooter, restore health, and wear a mask of invulnerability. Based on the 1967 Disney film, which was adapted from Rudyard Kipling's short stories, *The Jungle Book* includes appearances by such familiar characters as Baloo, Bagheera, Colonel Hathi, Kaa, Shere Khan, and King Louie. Includes a nice, instrumental version of the Academy Award-nominated "The Bare Necessities." Also released in varying forms for the NES, GB, GG, and SNES.



Fans of *Happy Trails* and *Loco-Motion* for the Intellivision should give *Junction* a try.

Jungle Strike: The Sequel to Desert Strike

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

The sequel to *Desert Strike* (as the title so ably points out), *Jungle Strike* features similar gameplay (thankfully), but has a variety of fresh features, including 26 new enemy weapons, faster scrolling, better graphics, more elaborate animations, and four new combat vehicles: a Comanche Helicopter (replacing the Apache), an XL-9 Hovercraft, a Special Forces Assault Cycle, and an F-117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter. New missions include destroying nuclear submarines, pulling off nighttime raids, laying waste to drug processing plants, defending Washington, D.C. monuments, and more. Also released for the GG, GB, and SNES. Followed by: *Urban Strike*.

Jurassic Park

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

With the 1993 theatrical release of *Jurassic Park*, Steven Spielberg upped the ante in terms of visual effects, instantly rendering all previous dinosaur films hopelessly dated. While nothing revolutionary, this video game on which the movie is loosely based has nice graphics as well. Players guide Dr. Alan Grant as he runs, jumps, climbs, crouches, activates switches, and rides elevators through seven fairly enjoyable levels (including Jungle, Power Station, Canyon, and Volcano), using non-lethal darts, stun guns, rockets, and grenades to battle compies, raptors, pterodons, and other dinosaurs. One level based on the original Michael Crichton novel (but not found in the movie) finds Grant rafting down a river. Adding more life to the

game is the ability to play as a raptor, pouncing, biting, and kicking its way through fewer (and somewhat different) levels. Purists will lament the absence of the John Williams theme, but this is one of the better looking, sounding, and playing movie-based games of the era. Much different than *Jurassic Park* for the NES, SNES, Sega CD, Game Gear, and other systems.

Jurassic Park: Rampage Edition

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

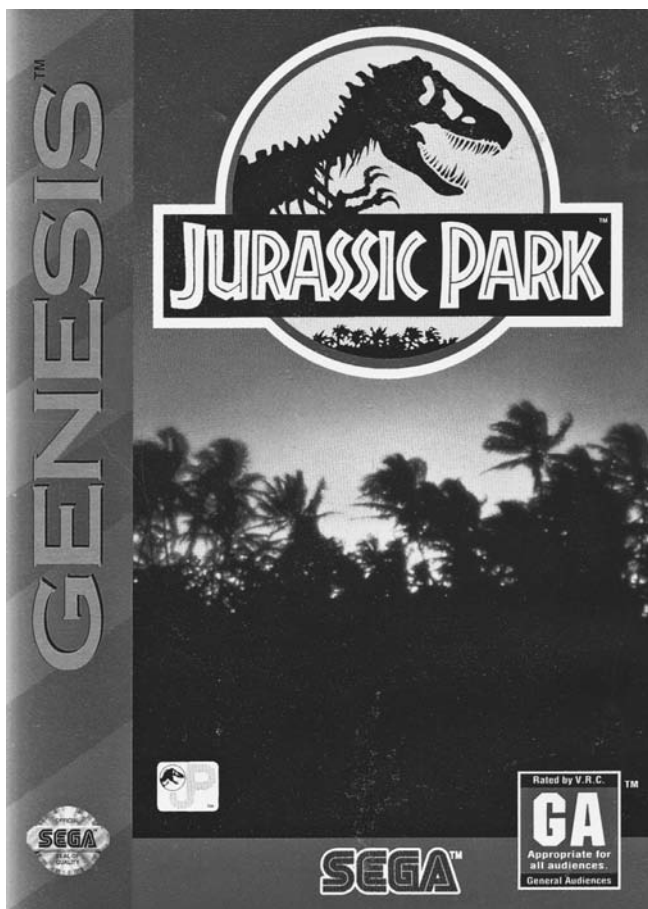
Rampage Edition is similar to the original *Jurassic Park* in that players can go through the game as: Alan Grant, who runs, climbs, jumps, and shoots; or as a raptor, who runs, jumps,

creeps, tail-whips, kicks, and bites. However, Grant is now given more lethal weaponry, such as a flamethrower (the added violence netted the game an M-13 rating). Also, the graphics have been spruced up a bit, and the levels, though borrowing some art from the original, are all new. Levels include: Hidden Ruins; Raptor Rapids (where Grant pilots a motor boat, or the raptor runs while a river is seen in the background); Aviary (goal: get to the bottom of the stage); a sinking Cargo Ship (goal: keep above the rising water and escape); and more. While playing as the raptor, consuming a certain amount of lysine puts the dinosaur in a more powerful rampage mode, giving the game its title. *Rampage Edition* is playable, but the original *Jurassic Park* has more sure-footed jumping and more accurate collision detection. Also released for the Sega CD. Followed by: *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.

Justice League Task Force

Publisher: Acclaim. Developer: Sunsoft/Condor. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Released the same year as the original arcade version of *Marvel Super Heroes*, *Justice League Task Force* pits DC Comics' Justice League of America members Batman, Superman, Flash, Green Arrow, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, and the Flash against one another in a series of *Street Fighter II*-style, one-on-one fights (regrettably, Green Lantern didn't make the cut). Using punches, kicks, and their patented gadgets and super powers (heat vision, Batarangs, tornado spins, flame arrows, tiara tosses, and the like), the heroes also battle Cheetah, Despero, and Darkseid. Unfortunately, the special moves are hard to pull off, making them all but worthless—enemies will pummel your character while you futilely attempt to get the controller to respond to semi-elaborate com-



Jurassic Park for the Genesis is based on the 1993 Steven Spielberg blockbuster of the same name.

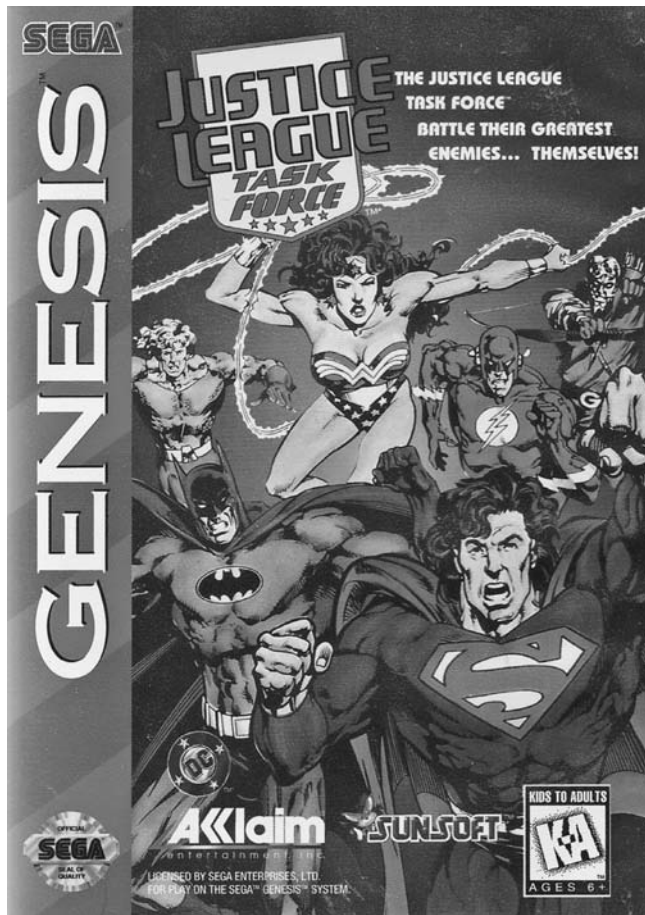
mands. The standard fighting action is fun, however, and special settings give gamers the option of playing at crazy-fast speeds. Some argue that it's silly to pit such physically weaker characters as Batman and Green Arrow against the god-like Superman and Wonder Woman, but who cares? It's simply cool to fight as DC heroes. This precursor, of sorts, to *Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe* (PS3, Xbox 360) was also released for the SNES.

Ka-Ge-Ki: Fists of Steel

Publisher: Sage's Creation. Developer: Hot-B. Fighting, 1 player. 1991.

Based on Taito's 1988 coin-op game (which was simply called *Kageki*), *Ka-Ge-Ki: Fists of*

Steel is the oddball fighting game that lacks a two-player simultaneous mode (the arcade original at least had a two-player alternating mode). As Kei, a powerful Japanese boxer, players must face nine Kageki gang members and four underlings in a series of one-on-one fights, ultimately confronting the big bad boss. Kei can only duck, jump, and throw three types of punches (jab, super jab, and straight), but his rivals are outfitted with more colorful fighting styles (at least in comparison). The game is an absolute joke, featuring sluggish controls, unimaginative voice effects, and goofy, big-headed characters. *Ka-Ge-Ki* may be subtitled "Fists of Steel," but, unfortunately for 16-bit fighting fans everywhere, it has feet of clay.



Justice League Task Force, which shares its name with a comic book series (1993–1996), lets players duke it out as Batman, Flash, Superman, and other DC Comics legends.

Kawasaki SuperBike Challenge

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Lankhor. Motorcycle Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Viewed from just above the windshield of the titular motorcycle, *Kawasaki SuperBike Challenge* has players racing on 15 different twisting, turning tracks (including the Suzuka 8-Hour Endurance Race), trying to make the best time. Players can turn the weather on or off, select from three types of tires (slick, medium, and wet), and choose between manual or automatic transmission and high or low gears (high is faster, but low makes cornering easier). Other options include four difficulty levels, two game modes (Training and Championship), music on or off, and number of laps (5, 10, or 15). Pit stops are available, as is a two-player split-screen mode. The bike's engine makes an annoyingly high pitched sound, but the game looks pretty decent, evoking (at least to some degree) SNES racers *Dirt Trax FX* and *Stunt Race FX* (both of which

benefitted from Nintendo's Super FX chip). Despite a good number of tracks, the game gets old pretty quickly and is lacking the excitement of such titles as *Super Hang-On* and *Road Rash*. The SNES version has better crashes. Also released for the Game Gear.

Kid Chameleon

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

Borrowing liberally from *Super Mario Bros.* (Kid jumps on enemies and breaks blocks with his head) and *Sonic the Hedgehog* (level design is roughly similar), *Kid Chameleon* is more than 100 levels of platforming goodness. Originality comes in the form of various helmets that can transform Kid into such characters as an Iron Knight, a Jason Vorhees-like "Maniaxe," and a rampaging Berzerker. Each character has special powers or weapons, such as flight, skull bombs, or swords. There is no password system or battery backup for saving progress, but players can find warps to other levels. Unfortunately, some warps take Kid to previous levels.

King of the Monsters

Publisher: Takara. Developer: SPS. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Like the SNES version, *King of the Monsters* for the Genesis is missing two of the creatures found in the arcade/Neo Geo original (1991), along with the two-player coop mode. Gamers select from four different giant monsters (a super-hero, a Godzilla-like creature, a rock monster, and a beetle creature), each of which can punch, kick, do a special move, and pull off pile drivers, bear hugs, and back drops. The one-on-one battles take place across four Japanese cities. During fights, monsters can crush buildings and pick up and throw tanks, jets, battleships, and laser vehicles.

King of the Monsters 2

Publisher: Takara. Developer: Betop. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

This sequel to *King of the Monsters* boasts more levels, more monsters, and a new type of character: minor fighter aliens, who pester the

player's monster as he fights Alien Super Monsters (humans in tanks, subs, and fighter planes also attack). The cartridge is based on SNK's arcade/Neo Geo game (1992) of the same name, but without the side-scrolling aspects, making it more like a standard fighting game (the SNES rendition of *King of the Monsters 2* retains the side-scrolling beat-'em-up portions). There are nine special attack-equipped fighters from which to choose, including Huge Frogger (laser breath, teleport), Claw Head (scattering slime ball, wish of death), and Aqua Slug (rolling shell attack, tornado attack, bubble blowout). Battle environments include Tokyo, Lava Zone, Kyoto, and Grand Canyon, among six others. In two-player mode, each gamer picks a monster for head-to-head fighting. Also released for the Neo Geo CD.

King Salmon: The Big Catch

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Hot-B. Sports/Fishing, 1 player. 1993.

King Salmon begins with a high overhead view as players pilot their boat around a lake or river, looking for a place to fish. Once the player finds a good spot, the action switches to a side-view, underwater perspective, and this is where players can see fish swimming by. A small window in the bottom left corner of the screen shows a guy sitting in his boat. During the fish catching process, there are a number of challenges the player may face, including: "He's heading for the bottom"; "He's making a zig zag run"; "He's jumping"; and "You are caught on some driftwood." Depending on the circumstance, players can select from various potential solutions (selectable via text menus) such as: "Free the drag"; "Pull up the rod"; and "Reel in your line fast." Other strategic selections include line length, line depth, and lure type (spoon, spinner, plug, herring, live herring, or Kenai tackle). By catching lots of fish, players can level up their character in terms of strength, stamina, and technique. There are four fishing areas, including Vancouver Island and Kenai River Basin.

King's Bounty: The Conqueror's Quest

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: New World Computing. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 player. 1991.

Arech Dragonbreath has stolen King Maximus's Scepter of Order, shattering it into 25 pieces that must be found by the player. This requires selecting a character to control (a knight, a paladin, a sorceress, or a barbarian), amassing an army consisting of five different races (out of a possible 25), attacking castles, gathering information from townsfolk, fighting turn-based battles, managing a weekly salary, and finding randomly generated treasure chests that contain gold and magic spells. Unlike the computer versions of this complex, strategy-intensive game, the overworld armies in the Genesis rendition move in real time.

KLAX

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

A port of Atari's challenging, *Tetris*-influenced (though still highly original) arcade game, *KLAX* for the Genesis has players lining up descending (on a conveyor belt) tiles in rows, columns, and diagonals. Scoring a "KLAX" (three or more tiles of the same color lined up) removes those tiles from the screen. Players can catch each tile on a paddle and drop it into position below, hold onto the tile (up to five at a time), or hoist the tile back up to the conveyor belt. Combos are worth extra points, and certain objectives (such as getting a set number of KLAXs) must be fulfilled to complete each wave. Letting too many tiles build up at the bottom of the screen ends the game. The two-player mode is split screen, with each contestant playing his or her own game (one player's game does not affect the other). The voice effects are missing, but this is nevertheless a nice, colorful port of the 1989 coin-op classic. The TurboGrafx-16 version does have voice effects. Also released for the Atari 7800, Atari Lynx, Game Boy, Game Gear, NES, and other systems.

Krusty's Super Fun House

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Audiogenic. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1992.

Like its SNES counterpart, the *Simpsons*-themed *Krusty's Super Fun House* for the Genesis is a graphically enhanced take on *Krusty's*

Fun House for the NES. The *Lemmings*-like gameplay has Krusty using blocks, blowers, pipe sections, jars, springs, and other objects to lure rats to traps set by Bart, Homer, Side-show Mel, and Corporal Punishment. Krusty can also throw pies at snakes, flying pigs, aliens, and birds, and he can pick up mugs, dolls, burgers, and other items for health, extra lives, and bonus points. More than 60 maze-like levels make Krusty's job a difficult one.

La Russa Baseball 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Stormfront Studios/High Score Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The follow-up to *Tony La Russa Baseball*, *La Russa Baseball 95* features more than 700 Major Leaguers, which is around 200 or so more than in the original game. In addition, there are now six different stadiums resembling real ballparks (as opposed to the generic stadium in the first game), and the behind-the-batter viewpoint is now supplemented by a view from behind the pitcher's mound. Once again, although the game is backed by the Major League Baseball Player's Association, licensing from the league itself is absent, meaning team names and logos are inauthentic. Other features abound, however, including wind conditions, trades, relief pitcher warm-ups, infield and outfield shifts, three difficulty levels, customizable teams, batter-backed stats over an entire season, player ratings based on their real-life counterparts, and more. Gamers can play (or simply manage) a preseason match or compete in a 162-game season. Two styles of play are available: the arcade-like Slugfest and the more detailed Sim. Once again, manager extraordinaire Tony La Russa is on hand to offer advice.

Lakers versus Celtics and the NBA Playoffs

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

An upgrade of the computer game released the previous year, *Lakers versus Celtics* spawned a pair of sequels (*Bulls versus Blazers*

and *Bulls vs Lakers*) and is the forerunner of the *NBA Live* series. The five-on-five action is viewed from the side, with official licensing allowing for authentic NBA teams, logos, and players (who wear their jersey numbers and are recognizable by such attributes as height and hair color). Each star has his own signature moves and animations, such as Larry Bird's in flight, Clyde Drexler's glide, Charles Barkley's gorilla dunk, and Michael Jordan's air reverse. There are eight teams to choose from (plus an East and a West All Star squad), and players can make substitutions, view half-time highlights from around the league, and play an exhibition game or compete in the NBA playoffs. Gameplay is a little slow, but the graphics are nicely detailed and include such flourishes as player portraits (for the starting five on each team) and coaches pacing the sidelines. The game's TV-style presentation was cutting edge at the time, as was the use of real players.

Landstalker

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Climax Entertainment. Isometric Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1993.

Landstalker puts players in the role of Nigel the Wood Elf, who must explore the land of Mercator in search of King Nole's treasure. Gameplay, despite the relatively unusual isometric perspective, is fairly standard as Nigel (who has a little fairy pal named Friday) must explore exotic locales (including a crypt, a castle, and mountains) and battle monsters. Nigel wields a sword (upgradeable to magic, thunder, ice, and earthquake) and dons armor and boots. Other helpful items include: rings that recharge weaponry and increase resistance to attack; garlic that keeps vampires away; a ticket that allows access to a casino; and many more. Similar to *Light Crusader*.

Last Action Hero

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Bits. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1993.

Like the SNES version, *Last Action Hero* for the Genesis is a dreadful game inspired by one of Arnold Schwarzenegger's lesser films. Players guide a painfully inadequate, virtually

unrecognizable Jack Slater through seven movie-based levels of play, two of which find Slater behind the wheel of a car, running down mobsters while dodging barriers, manholes, and double-parked cars (scenarios absent from the NES cartridge). The rest of the game finds Slater walking (right and left only), crouching, jumping, punching, and kicking his way through a minefield of gun-, knife-, and baseball bat-wielding bad guys. Clumsy controls make the onslaught of attackers hard to fend off, and the game lacks such needful features as continues, extra lives, and weaponry. Health hearts are the only pick-ups in this boring, unimaginative slugfest. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear.

Last Battle

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1989.

A bloodless, gore-deprived rendition of Japan's *Fist of the North Star* (Mega Drive), *Last Battle* was a launch title with the Genesis console. Players guide a large Jet-Kwon-Do expert named Aarzak through castles, mountains, pirate ships, labyrinthine dungeons, and other areas (which quickly become repetitious), punching and kicking redundant bad guys. Some bosses are super tough while others are pushovers. When his meter gets full, Aarzak loses his shirt and becomes more powerful. Unlike most games of its type, the mediocre *Last Battle* has a map screen and certain areas where it's easy to get lost.

The Lawnmower Man

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Atod AB/Teque London. Multi-Genre Action, 1 player. 1994.

Loosely based on the 1992 feature film (which was loosely based on the Stephen King short story), *The Lawnmower Man* takes place in a virtual world of sorts, with players engaging in four types of gameplay. The platform shooter areas consist of running and jumping on buildings, shooting such enemies as cars and guards, dodging enemy fire and other obstacles (including soda cans and psychic furniture), and grabbing and using such power-ups

as homing bullets and smart bombs. The virtual reality areas are viewed from a first-person perspective (only the player's gloves are visible) as gamers fly through portals, avoiding walls and other obstacles. During certain virtual reality segments, players are armed with a gun for shooting enemies, hexagons, and other obstacles. There are also third-person areas in which players view their flying character from behind as he shoots enemies and avoids such obstacles as columns, shapes, and walls. Also released for the SNES. The Sega CD version, with its mini-games and interactive movie elements, is much different.

Legend of Wukong

Publisher: Super Fighter Team. Developer: Gametec/Super Fighter Team. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 2008.

Originally released in 1998 in Taiwan as *Wucom Legend*, *Legend of Wukong* was translated into English by Super Fighter Team and released worldwide in 2008 (it works on both NTSC and PAL Genesis/Mega Drive systems). It was the second commercially released Genesis game since 1998 (after *Beggar Prince*). Featuring a storyline loosely based on the Chinese legend, *Journey to the West*, the game puts players in the role of a young boy named Wukong stuck in feudal China, trying to make his way through time and back home. Joined by a sexist pig (literally) and a demon-slayer, Wukong must journey through six long levels, exploring labyrinthine dungeons, using magic, purchasing equipment, talking to characters, engaging in turn-based battles (viewed from the side), and more. Cute cut scenes and humor-filled dialogue add more than a dash of personality and pizzazz to the battle-intensive action. The cartridge shipped in a clamshell case with full-color insert and glossy instruction manual, pleasing hardcore Genesis fans delighted by the notion of a new game being released for their favorite 16-bit system.

Lemmings

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Sunsoft. Adventure Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Boasting an impressive 180 levels of play (as opposed to 125 in the Super NES version), *Lemmings* for the Genesis is a fine port of the popular computer puzzler (1991). Players guide a cursor around the screen, assigning various commands (climb, dig, block, blast through, and the like) to lemmings in order to guide them safely past obstacles (such as gaps and walls) and to their goal within a set time limit. A split-screen mode is available, as are six difficulty levels. Mouse control isn't available, so the PC and SNES versions handle a bit better. Also, the game lacks the warping around the map option found in the SNES rendition. But these are small concerns—this is a great game. Also released for the GB, GG, NES, PSP, and numerous other systems.

Lemmings 2: The Tribes

Publisher: Psygnosis. Developer: Digital Developments/Krisalis Software. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1994.

In *Lemmings 2*, the loveable, green-haired creatures have split into 12 distinct tribes, including Beach, Circus, Egyptian, Space, and Medieval. Players must complete 10 levels for each tribe, and, unlike the first game, players are rewarded for guiding as many lemmings to the exit as possible. As in the original game, players assign skills to the mindlessly moving lemmings to help them avoid traps and obstacles and reach the exit. However, there are many more skills this time (over 60 in all), including wind (ballooner, magic carpet, jet pack), ground removing (scooper, digger, laser blaster), ground adding (filler, stacker, platformer), shooting (archer, thrower, bazooker), moving (runner, climber, swimmer), and more. The view is from the side, and battery backup saves progress. Mouse control isn't available, so the PC and SNES versions of the game handle a bit better. Followed by: *Lemmings 3D* and *Lemmings & Oh No! More Lemmings* (PSX).

Lethal Enforcers

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Light Gun Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Rated MA-17, *Lethal Enforcers* was originally packaged with The Justifier, a blue light gun that works very well with the game (it's certainly superior to using a standard control pad). Players, as Dirty Harry wannabes, take aim and fire at bad guys (who wear suits, shades, ski masks, and/or coats) and at their projectiles, which include knives, hand grenades, and bazooka shells. Each time a bad guy pops up, you'd better move quickly, but care should be taken not to shoot women and other innocent bystanders (à la *Hogan's Alley*). Shooting various icons upgrades the player's standard issue gun to magnum, automatic, assault rifle, shotgun, machine gun, or grenade gun. Stages include: The Bank Robbery, Chinatown Assault, The Hijack, The Drug Dealer, and The Chemical Plant, some of which incorporate moving vehicles. *Lethal Enforcers* is a blast to play, but its grainy digitized graphics and garbled voice effects have aged poorly. Also, the user must play a near perfect game to beat it. When compared to Konami's 1992 arcade original, the Genesis version has fewer animations, fewer colors, and is lacking environmental bullet holes and female enemies. Also released for the SNES and Sega CD, the latter augmented with digitized sound.

Lethal Enforcers II: Gun Fighters

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Light Gun Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A highly entertaining shooter, *Lethal Enforcers II* transports the light gun action of the original game to the Old West, a perfectly suitable setting for such a game. Armed with a standard gun and the ability to upgrade to a cannon, rifle, Gatling gun, double rig, .50 caliber sharp, and shotgun, players shoot outlaws while avoiding killing innocent folks. Enemy projectiles and environmental objects, such as barrels and windows, can also be shot. Stages to battle through include: The Bank Robbery, Stagecoach Holdup, Saloon Showdown, The Train Robbery, and The Hideout, each of which includes a time-consuming boss sequence. A pair of between-level bonus rounds lets players take pot shots at whiskey bottles

and engage in a quick-draw contest. Easier than the original *Lethal Enforcers*, this sequel is also more fun. Naturally, the limited Genesis palette means that the arcade game, which Konami released earlier the same year, is much more colorful. Also, the voice effects are gratingly repetitive. Rated MA-13. Also released for the Sega CD (with digitized sound). Followed by: *Lethal Enforcers I and II* (a PlayStation title collecting both games in the series).

LHX Attack Chopper

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Fly the Light Helicopter eXperimental or the AH-64 Apache in *LHX Attack Chopper*, a flight combat simulator featuring pseudo-3D, polygonal graphics. Players fly 30 missions over such areas as Libya, Europe, and South East Asia, destroying 40 different types of targets, including tanks, gunships, missile sites, and fighter jets. There are 11 different views of the action (including, interestingly enough, inside the cockpit of the target), and both choppers are highly maneuverable, featuring altitude control, backwards flying, autorotation, and side slips. In two-player mode, one gamer is the gunner while the other is the pilot. Includes weather conditions and day and nighttime missions. Based on the 1990 computer game.

Liberty or Death

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

In *Liberty or Death*, which is a reenactment of sorts of the American Revolution, players can take the side of the Continental Army or the Royal Army (a.k.a. the Redcoats), potentially re-writing history in the process. To win the war, players must defeat the opposing army or cause their government to surrender. This requires effective management of human and material resources, including generals, soldiers (infantry, cavalry, guerrilla, and artillery), gold, rations, powder, cannons, boats, and more. Popular support, foreign aid, smallpox, storms, mutiny, and other elements come into play as well. This complex game,

which includes an 85-page instruction manual, was also released for the SNES. Based on the 1989 computer game.

Light Crusader

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Treasure. Isometric Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1995.

Developed by Treasure (of *Gunstar Heroes* fame), *Light Crusader* stars a knight named Sir David Lander, who must travel the land searching for villagers and interrogating townspeople for clues. He also uses gloves, armor, a variety of swords, and elemental magic (earthquakes, thunder, ice, and the like) to battle goblins, skeletons, ninjas, wraiths, and other enemies. To create more sophisticated attacks, David can combine magicks. There are creatures aplenty, but the action is puzzle-heavy, meaning David will spend much of his time doing such things as triggering switches and pushing items. Similar to *Landstalker*.

Lightening Force: Quest for the Darkstar

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Technosoft. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

Lightening Force is the fourth game in the popular *Thunder Force* series (the Mega Drive release is actually called *Thunder Force IV*), leading many to question Sega's curious marketing decision regarding the title (which appears misspelled). Gameplay is similar to *Thunderforce III*, with players piloting a ship through nine beautifully illustrated stages (beneath and above the sea, over deserts, through colorful caves, through the enemy bio-base), using 10 different weapons (including twin shot and back shot) to blow away marine battle cruisers, alien bio-machines, and scores of other enemies. New elements to this fantastic series include a special Thunder Sword weapon and a larger playfield (the action can now scroll up and down a bit). Released the same year as *Thunder Spirits* (SNES). Followed by: *Thunder Force V: Perfect System* (PSX).

The Lion King

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Developer: Westwood Studios/Disney Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

The Lion King brings Disney's epic 1994 feature film to playable life as gamers guide Simba through a nice variety of levels, including The Pridelands and The Elephant Graveyard. As a young lion, Simba can roll to access certain areas and damage things in his path. Adult Simba can slash, maul, and flip his enemies. Both can crouch, climb, duck, look up and down, roar, and pounce on enemies. The action is varied and fun, with players jumping on rhinos to propel up into trees, hopping along bird nests to get to monkeys, riding an ostrich (during a particularly difficult stretch of the game), swinging and climbing through bones, getting jump boosts via elephants, running from wildebeests, throwing coconuts at a gorilla, dodging rocks thrown by hyenas, riding down waterfalls, avoiding dripping lava, and much more. There's plenty of platforming action, some of which contains puzzle elements (such as roaring at monkeys to make it past certain areas). A popular Genesis title (at one point it was the pack-in game with the console), *The Lion King* looks and sounds amazing, and it's a lot of fun as well. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES.

The Lost Vikings

Publisher: Interplay. Developer: Silicon & Synapse/Krisalis Software. Adventure Puzzle, 1-3 players (simultaneous). 1993.

After a fine day of pillaging and plundering, Erik the Swift, Baleog the Fierce, and Olaf the Stout are kidnapped by the evil space zoo operator Tomator. Working together, the trio of Vikings must escape, which takes them through 43 nicely illustrated, puzzle-filled levels, including Egypt, Prehistoria, The Great Factory, and Wacky World. Each Viking has a specific skill set and character-specific weaponry (for battling mummies, dinosaurs, and other enemies), meaning they must work together to complete each level (one Viking alone cannot finish a stage). Players can alternate between the Vikings (each of which has a colorful, cartoonish personality) or have a friend or two join in to help. Also helpful are the various

items the players can find, including arrows, bombs, keys, targets, gravity boots, and steaks, the latter of which replenish energy. Text clues are given as well. *The Lost Vikings* has both style and substance, but it's not for the impatient gamer looking to mindlessly barrel his or her way through each level. Also released for the SNES and GBA. Followed by: *The Lost Vikings 2* (SNES) and *Norse by Norsewest: The Return of the Lost Vikings* (PSX, Saturn).

The Lost World: Jurassic Park

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Appaloosa Interactive. Overhead View Action, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1997.

The third game in the trilogy (after *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic Park: Rampage Edition*),

The Lost World: Jurassic Park eschews the side-scrolling action of its predecessors in favor of top-down gameplay. The objective is to explore lush levels (which include Mobile Lab and Isla Sorna sites 1–5), using hunting weapons (taser, Lindstradt tranquilizer gun, and gas bomb thrower) and deadly force weapons (combat shotgun, hand grenades, short range homing missile, and machine gun) on evil snipers and on such dinosaurs as Troodons, Dilophasaurus, raptors, and a T-Rex. Poisonous plants and landmines should be avoided. Activities include: rescuing a hunter in a cave, activating eight sensors, luring Stegosaurus into a cave, escorting a truck to safety, engaging in unusual boss battles, and much more. Players will also commandeer a river raft, a helicopter, a truck, and a motorcycle. Released late in the life of the Genesis, *The Lost World* is a diverse, nice looking game.

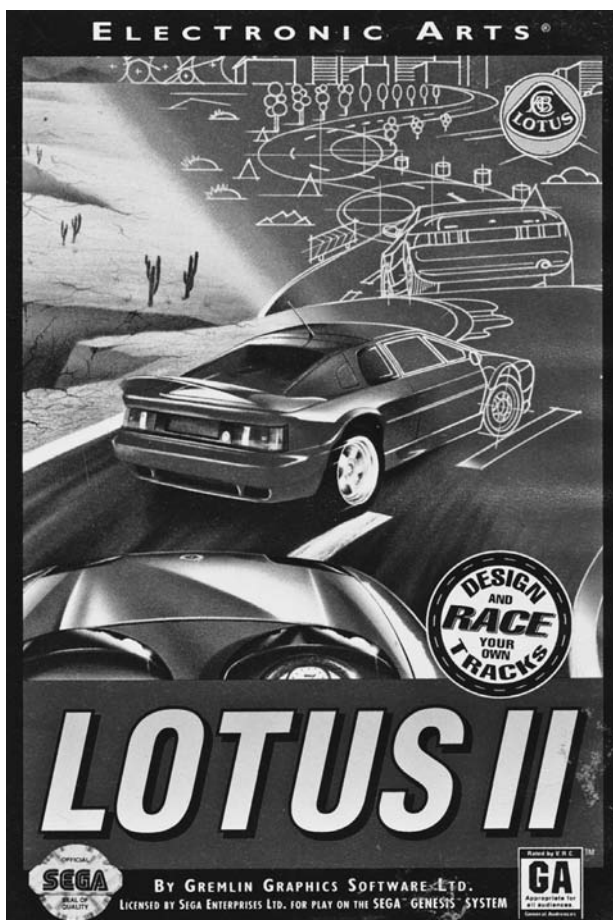
Lotus Turbo Challenge

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Sports Car Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Sporting eight different tracks, a split-screen two-player mode, two drivable cars (a Lotus Turbo Esprit and a Lotus Elan), and a variety of track obstacles and weather conditions (tumbleweeds, trucks, cars, log jumps, snow, thunderstorms, and the like), *Lotus Turbo Challenge* has a decent amount of options and features, but gameplay is primarily about racing rapidly from checkpoint to checkpoint in order to keep going. And it does this pretty well. Viewed from a behind-the-car perspective, the racing action will challenge even the best of gamers, since mistake-free play is virtually the only way to succeed.

Lotus II

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Sports Car Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.



This sequel to *Lotus Turbo Challenge* lets players create their own race courses.

As in *Lotus Turbo Challenge*, *Lotus II* offers solid, behind-the-car perspective racing, with two-player action depicted via split screen. This time around there are three cars available (including the M 200 concept car), and, more significantly, players can now create their own tracks, which involves adjusting the number of turns and steepness of hills, creating weather conditions (snow, fog, and sun), and adjusting the number of such obstacles as rocks and trees. Other features include: automatic and manual transmission; 13 racing scenarios (including beach, desert, nighttime, and storm); refueling (via a simplistic pit area); and sound effects or one of four music tracks turned on (but not both at the same time). Races are against the clock or against 19 computer opponents.

M-1 Abrams Battle Tank

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Dynamix. First-Person Tank Shooter/Simulation, 1 player. 1991.

Adapted from the 1988 computer game (which benefitted from keyboard and mouse control), *M-1 Abrams Battle Tank* puts players in the cockpit of a 63-ton tank, looking through the view screen (at shaded polygonal graphics), which takes up the top half of the playfield. The lower half is reserved for readouts, gauges, and the like. This is a tank game, so the action is slow and methodical, with players performing such mission-based objectives as laying waste to enemy strongholds, blasting armored columns, protecting supply convoys, and seeking out and destroying Soviet FS1-1s, BMPs, and other vehicles that are pouring over the border into West Germany. The game is fairly complex (in a good way), offering: four battle perspectives; day and nighttime conflict; a variety of weapons (including sabots, heat rounds, a 120mm gun, and AXs); limited fuel and ammo (meaning restocking is a must); realistic tank maneuvering; lock-on weapons intelligence; and armor penetration. Preceded by: *Abrams Battle Tank* (PC, 1988).

Madden NFL '94

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The John Madden series continues with *Madden NFL '94*, which offers a number of new components, most notably an NFL license (meaning real team names are included), larger players, and four-player action (via EA's 4-Way Play adapter). Other fresh features include a bluff mode for hiding plays, reverse-angle instant replays, 72 new offensive plays (each of which can be flipped), and the ability to customize audibles at any time. The game contains a whopping 80 teams: 28 NFL squads; 38 Super Bowl Teams since 1966; 12 all-star franchise teams since 1950; and two All-Madden teams. Also released for the SNES.

Madden NFL 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Madden NFL 95 improves upon the previous game in the series with a variety of new features, most notably an NFLPA license, meaning real player names are used. Other newly added components include a windowless passing option, a bigger field, celebration dances, 44 additional Madden-designed defenses, new offensive moves (high step, straight arm, and QB slide), 3D rendered players, more than 100 player injuries, and team and position stats all season long. Past Super Bowl and all-star teams have been removed. Also released for the Game Gear and SNES.

Madden NFL 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

In *Madden NFL 96*, John Madden gets an assist from Pat Summerall and Lesley Visser, making for a three-man broadcast team. Other fresh features include: visible jersey numbers, laterals, fair catches, custom TD celebrations, a Scouting Combine (create players at any position), General Manager capabilities (trade and sign players, monitor salary cap), more than 240 redesigned plays from Madden's own playbook, and rendered graphics with new player animations (including swatted passes, left-handed quarterbacks, kneeling, and one-

handed catches). All 30 NFL teams are featured, including Jacksonville and Carolina. Also released for the Game Gear and SNES.

Madden NFL 97

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

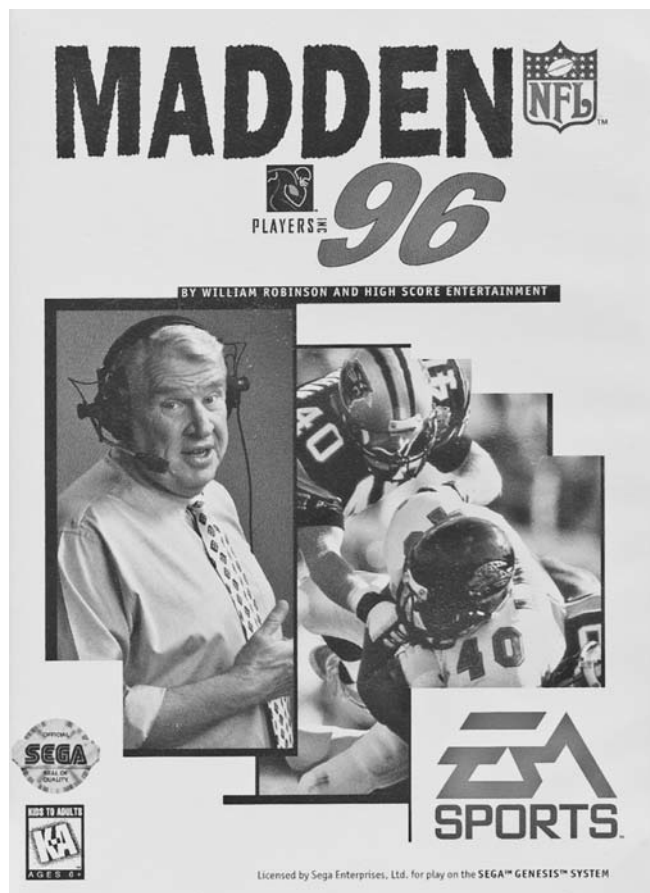
Sporting more than 100 past and present NFL teams, *Madden NFL 97* for the Genesis updates the popular series with the following upgrades: motion captured player graphics; a 5 Receiver Passing Mode (which was in *Madden NFL 96* for the SNES); player sets within each formation; the ability to save highlights; over 500 redesigned Madden plays; player fatigue; custom leagues and tournaments; and an “iso-

cam” allowing gamers to control any player at any time. John Madden and Pat Summerall call the action. Also released for the GG, SNES, and PSX.

Madden NFL 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1997.

One of the last official releases for the Genesis, *Madden NFL 98* updates team uniforms and logos for the 1998 season. Other new features include: enhanced computer AI; team hot and cold streaks; trading deadlines; 3D-rendered graphics and animations; three difficulty levels (Rookie, Pro, and Madden); and the ability to replay any of the 10 previous Super Bowls. Also released for the SNES, PSX, and Saturn. Followed by numerous sequels, including *Madden NFL 99* for the PSX and N64.



This entry in the popular *Madden* series sports the three-man broadcast team of John Madden, Pat Summerall, and Lesley Visser.

Mallet Legend's Whac-A-Critter

Publisher: Realtec. Developer: AV Artisan. Action, 1 player. 1993.

Whac-A-Critter is essentially a video game take on the coin-operated novelty game, *Whac-A-Mole*, in which moles pop out of nine holes and players use a plastic and rubber hammer to “bop” them on the head. Embellished with a save-the-princess storyline, *Whac-A-Critter* adds further challenges to the formula by insisting that players avoid hitting a dog and a princess. Also, certain moles wear helmets and must be hit several times. A nine-button Smash Controller peripheral was created for the game, but that is unfortunately very hard to find today. What makes this unfortunate is that the game is extremely difficult (not to mention frustrating) when played with a standard Genesis controller. Pastel color-

ing, cartoonish characters, and upbeat music add to the fun — yes, the game is fairly enjoyable when played with a Smash Controller, but good luck locating one.

Marble Madness

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Atari. Maze, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Despite the lack of track-ball control, *Marble Madness* for the Genesis is an excellent (if predictable) port of Atari's 1984 coin-op classic. Guided by a skilled player, the d-pad does a great job maneuvering the marble around the six short, timed, Escher-esque mazes, which consist of ramps, narrow pathways, plateaus, chasms, pipes, marble munchers, vacuums, pools of acid, hammers, and "im-wams" (pistons). Terrordactyls and steelies (enemy marbles) provide additional challenges. *Marble Madness* is indeed maddening, but this port offers three difficulty levels, the easiest of which makes the game imminently beatable. *Marble Madness* was also adapted for the GB, GBC, GBA (via *Marble Madness/KLAX*), GG, and NES.

Mario Andretti Racing

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Stormfront Studios/High Score Productions. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Endorsed by one of the best, most versatile drivers in the history of the sport, *Mario Andretti Racing* is loaded with features, including: 15 different tracks; three types of racing (sprint, stock, and Indy); digitized video of real pit sequences (fuel and worn tires are factors); behind-the-car, split-screen, and cockpit viewpoints (among others); three modes of play



Marble Madness is based on Atari's 1984 arcade classic of the same name. It's a nice port, though it does lack trackball control.

(Single Race, Circuit, and Career); instant replay; and onscreen advice from Andretti himself. The tracks have lots of twists and turns, and there are buildings, trees, and other objects in the background, but there's not much going on in terms of roadside visuals. Winning races lets players upgrade their cars and pit crew, and there are three different car body styles, nine different equipment packages for each car, and nine different drivers (each with different attributes). Slip streaming, slide turns, and other racing strategies give the game an air of realism. Andretti also endorsed: *Andretti Racing* (PSX, Saturn), *Mario Andretti's World GP* (NES), and *Mario Andretti's Indy Car Challenge* (SNES).

Mario Lemieux Hockey

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Ringler Studios. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Originally packaged with a puck sporting a reproduced Mario Lemieux signature, this game lets players enter a 16-team hockey tournament. Or, gamers can hone their skills in practice mode or play an exhibition match. The elevated, side-view action is bolstered by tons of features, including: shootouts (which are tough to execute); player substitutions and skill ratings; three skill levels; fights (which can be turned off); faceoffs (which, like fights, are shown in close-up); referee variations (fair, tough, and blind); statistics galore; and four period lengths. There is no NHL or NHLPA licensing, meaning players (other than Lemieux) and teams are fictional. If you find a copy of *Mario Lemieux Hockey* with the puck and original box intact, grab that bad boy — it's worth some serious coin.

Marko

Publisher: Domark Software. Developer: The Kremlin. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Colonel Brown, the evil owner of Sterling Toys, has turned all the town's animals into sludge monsters, prompting a boy named Marko to save the day. An avid soccer fan, the blond-haired Marko uses a soccer ball as his weapon, kicking the ball at mutated rats, bees, spiders, dinosaurs, birds, and other enemies. Marko can perform overhead kicks, headers, short kicks, low kicks, and medium kicks as he runs, jumps (over spike pits and slime pools and onto platforms), and battles his way through sewers, cellars, forests, and other suburban locations. Marko can also chip the ball (to keep it from touching the ground), bounce on the ball, trip himself (for ducking under projectiles), and wield a popgun. Grabbing stars, hearts, and other items grants players extra energy, points, and lives. Also released for the Game Gear and Sega CD, *Marko* is a fairly standard platformer that is noteworthy for its unusual (for the genre) sports theme. For another sports-themed platformer, check out *Michael Jordan: Chaos in the Windy City* (SNES).

Marsupilami

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Marsu. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

More than a standard platformer, the oddly titled *Marsupilami*, which is based on a French comic book and cartoon character created in 1958 by André Franquin, features a marsupial protagonist with an extremely long tail, which is used for punching such enemies as cowboys, pirates, warthogs, sailors, and kids with firecrackers. More importantly (at least in terms of the game standing out from the pack), the tail can turn into a shield, a parachute, a hammer, a winch, a pole vault, a bridge, a lever (for dislodging large objects), a mouse (for scaring Marsupilami's elephant pal into smashing rocks, crates, gates, and the like), and stair steps (for allowing the elephant to reach platforms he cannot normally climb). Cute, diverse, and strategy intensive, *Marsupilami* includes 10 levels: Circus, The Alps, Building Site, The Docks, Theme Park, Palombie, The Chahutas, The Jungle, River Clean Up, and Battle of the Marsupials.

Marvel Land

Publisher: Namco. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Featuring more levels and a more forgiving clock than its coin-op counterpart (Namco, 1989), *Marvel Land* finds Prince Paco running through a brightly colored fantasy land amusement park, jumping over obstacles and on top of ducks, penguins, pirates, teddy bears, and other enemies. Opening treasure chests releases such power-ups as dragon wings (for jumping higher), speed boots, or a special clone attack (unleashing multiple copies of the prince). Boss encounters take the form of mini-games (rock/paper/scissors, balloon busting contest, concentration, musical holes), and Prince Paco also rides log swings, uses a spirit tail whip attack, bowls over enemies with spring balls and barrels, goes on roller coaster rides, and enters Namco Light Parade bonus stages, which feature Namco characters from other games in the background. A charming, yet challenging platformer.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Bits Corporation. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

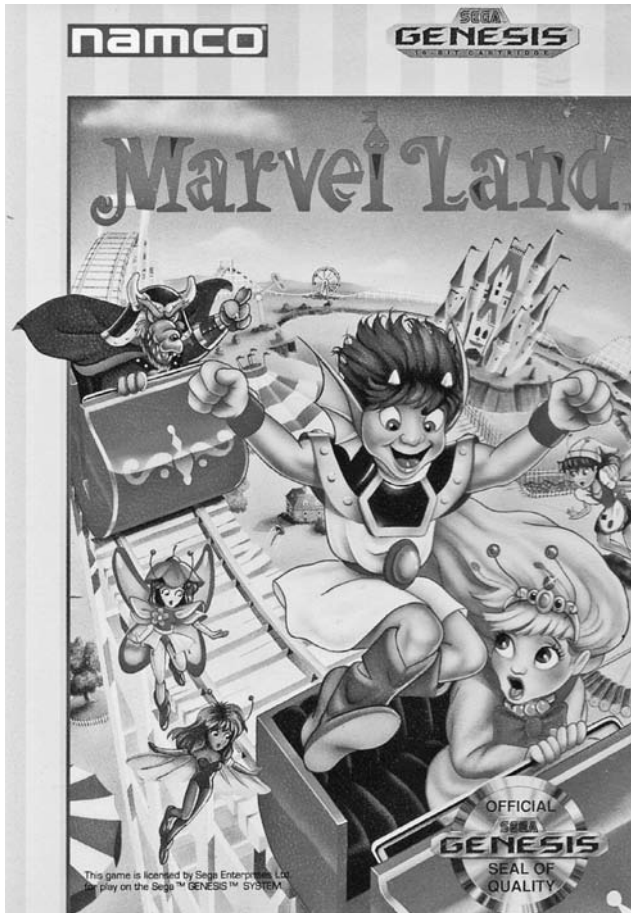
Based on Kenneth Branagh's 1994 feature film, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* puts players in control of the lumbering, shuffling brute, trudging through six levels of play: a crypt, the woods, a marsh, the Frankenstein Mansion, the arctic north, Ingolstadt, and the Alexander Nevsky. The monster's goal is to make peace with his existence and find the mad scientist who abandoned him shortly after his "birth." As the Frankenstein monster works his way through the game, jumping on platforms (the monster can jump ridiculously high), pulling

secret levers, dodging falling chandeliers and other obstacles, and finding hidden pathways and clues, he will use a staff and bolts of electricity to ward off dogs, bats, giant spiders, leeches, soldiers, sailors, and other enemies. Unfortunately, shooting electricity reduces the creature's life bar. Worse, the controls are clunky, and the labyrinthine levels are more of a chore than a pleasure to navigate. Despite a nice intro, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* is as lifeless and as plodding as its namesake. Also released for the SNES and Sega CD.

Master of Monsters

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: SystemSoft. Turn-Based Strategy, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Master of Monsters takes place on a hexagonal grid, with players, as one of five different masters, moving a variety of monsters around said game board (each master has different spells and monsters). The objective is to capture towers and, of course, defeat the human- or computer-controlled opponents. During a turn, there are a number of things to consider, including how many spaces a monster can move and what type of terrain the monster is moving on (lizards maneuver best in water, for example). Terrain types don't affect airborne monsters. Battles are viewed from the side, and monsters gain experience when victorious. Players can summon up to 30 monsters per battle, but the number of towers a player controls will determine this amount. Turns aren't timed, so you'll have plenty of time to strategize, but players are given a limited number of turns in Campaign mode, making for a steep challenge. A terrific musical score adds to the drama and fun.



Marvel Land for the Genesis is a charming side-scroller that has more levels than its coin-op cousin, which Namco released in 1989.

Math Blaster Episode 1

Publisher: Davidson & Associates.

Developer: Davidson & Associates. Educational/Math, 1 player. 1994.

Recommended for children ages 6 to 12, *Math Blaster Episode 1* is a watered down version of the 1993 computer game, *Math Blaster: In Search of Spot*, which is part of a series that began with *Math Blaster!* in 1986. The evil Trash Alien has abducted robot dog Spot and littered the universe with garbage, spurring Blasternaut into action. The cart is divided into three mini-games connected by cut scenes. In Trash Zapper, players look through the view screen of a space ship, blasting pieces of trash containing the correct number. In Cave Runner, Blasternaut uses his jet pack to fly through a cave, avoiding lava bombs and force fields while carrying code numbers to place between numbers on either side of cave gaps. In Math Blaster, which depicts the Trash Alien's large, hovering flying saucer, Blasternaut must fly into portholes containing the correct answers to the equations given. The Number Recycler level from the PC game is not included, nor is the Editor mode. This Sega Club title is designed to help kids with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *Math Blaster in the Prime Adventure* (DS).

Mazin Saga Mutant Fighter

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Dynamic Planning. Side-Scrolling Combat/Fighting, 1 player. 1993.

This largely ignored game is loads of fun, at least for the most part. Outfitted in a special suit of bio-armor, players, as Mazinger-Z, must make their way through post-apocalyptic Tokyo, India, Europe, New York, and Egypt, battling a variety of interesting, nicely illustrated alien invaders known as biobeasts. Mazinger-Z is a versatile character as he can run, jump, dash, somersault, kick, and pull off a number of sword-based fighting maneuvers, including wall of steel, jump-slice attack, upward slash, downward stab, spinning blade attack, and a whirling, slashing attack. Some of the bosses are so massive that only a small portion of them is visible onscreen, and the war-torn buildings, water effects, and other graph-

ical flourishes look great. At the end of each level, the game morphs into a highly pedestrian 2D fighter. *Mazin Saga Mutant Fighter* is based on *Mazinger Z*, the Japanese manga created by Go Nagai.

McDonald's Treasure Land Adventure

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Treasure. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

The platforming action in *McDonald's Treasure Land Adventure* is pleasant enough, but the cutesy theme of the game is an odd choice in the wake of *Gunstar Heroes*, Treasure's legendary hardcore shooter. Players guide fast food icon Ronald McDonald as he jumps over obstacles, collects gold, and tosses sparkling magic at baddies through four easy levels of play: Forest, Town, Sea, and Moon. The red- and yellow-clad hamburger restaurant clown can also use his scarf to swing on hooks and climb to higher ledges. Collecting enough gold lets gamers play a *Columns*-style matching game to win balloons, gems, and other items.

Mega Bomberman

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Like most *Bomberman* games, *Mega Bomberman* shines brightest in multi-player mode. Up to four gamers guide their little Bomberman around a top-down screen, releasing bombs, trying to get those bombs to explode in the pathways of the other Bombermen. Exploding bombs also destroys soft blocks (hard blocks are indestructible) that reveal such power-ups as: firepower (increases distance of bomb blasts); bomb (increases maximum number of bombs that can be set at one time); skates (increases running speed); bomb boot (enables Bomberman to kick bombs); and more. New for *Mega Bomberman* are five fun-to-ride, kangaroo-like characters called "Louies." Each Louie has a different skill, such as speed, kicking soft blocks, or kicking bombs over walls and blocks. In one-player mode, gamers bomb such creatures as bunnies, snails, aliens, and bosses (including a half-peeled banana). There are five multi-stage levels: Jam-

min' Jungle, Vexin' Volcano, Slammin' Sea, Crankin' Castle, and Thrashin' Tundra. A literal and figurative blast to play, *Mega Bomberman* is the Genesis version of *Bomberman '94*, which was released in Japan for the PC Engine.

Mega Turrican

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Factor 5.
Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

The sequel to *Turrican* (Genesis, GB, TG-16), *Mega Turrican* is a significant upgrade over the original game in terms of both graphics and gameplay. Players, wearing the Turrican assault suit, must run, jump, and shoot their way through five worlds (including the bio-mech laboratories of The Machine and the deep dungeons of the Alien Queen), trying to find the

exit in each of the game's massive 15 levels (which scroll vertically and horizontally). Weapons include lasers, multiple (*Contra*-like spread shot), rebound (shots ricochet off walls), homing missiles, smart bombs, and energy wheel (*Metroid*-like transformation into a ball). In addition, players can wield a special, fun-to-use plasma rope (similar to a grappling hook) for reaching high platforms and hidden areas. Items to grab include weapon containers, extra lives, hearts (to replenish energy), shields, and diamonds (for extra points). Fans of such Genesis games as *Contra: Hard Corps*, *Gunstar Heroes*, and *Midnight Resistance* will love *Mega Turrican*. SNES *Turrican* games include *Super Turrican* and *Super Turrican 2*.

Menacer 6-Game Cartridge

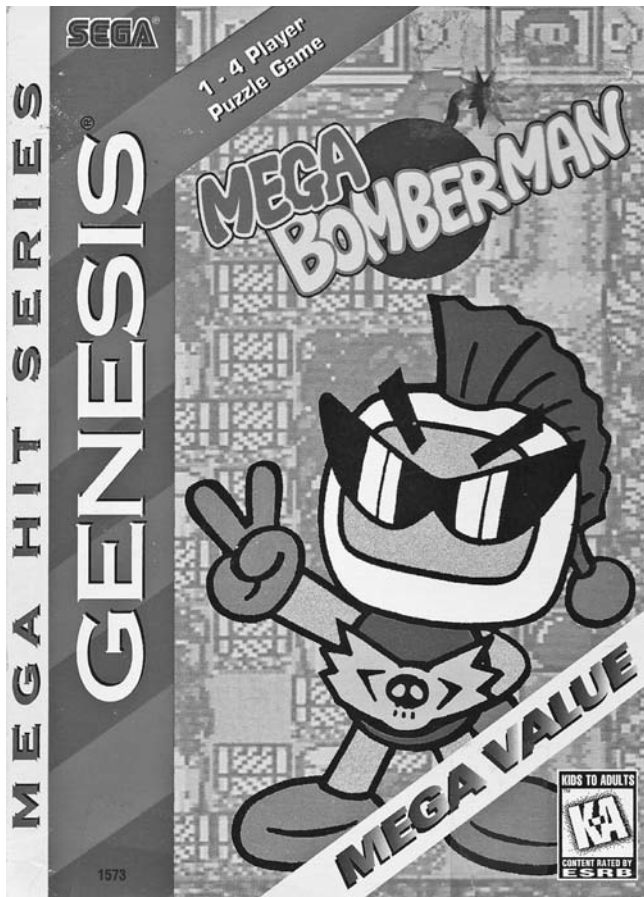
Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega.
Light Gun Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Bundled with Sega's Menacer light gun shooter (a peripheral similar to the Super Nintendo's Super Scope), *Menacer 6-Game Cartridge* contains the following titles: Rockman's Zone (shoot criminals while avoiding killing women and children); Space Station Defense (shoot aliens in the order they appear); Ready, Aim, Tomatoes! (use a slingshot to fire tomatoes at enemies from *ToeJam & Earl*); Whackball! (bat a ball around using the gun's target spot); Frontline (shoot bullets and missiles at anything that moves); and Pest Control (shoot all the bugs before they can eat a pizza).

MERCS

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Capcom. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

A fun run-and-gun shooter in the tradition of *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*, *MERCS* for the Genesis is a nice port of Capcom's 1990 arcade game, but it does lack



Designed for up to four players, *Mega Bomberman* is one of the all-time great party games.

the coin-op classic's three-player simultaneous mode. Making up somewhat for this absence is an Original mode, which boasts new levels and lets players enter tents to buy power-ups and recruit other mercenaries that can be used as reserves. In either mode, players guide their soldier up the screen, blowing away everything in sight with machine guns, bazookas, grenades, and other weaponry. There are also jeeps, tanks, and boats to commandeer. A must-play for *Front Line* fans.

Michael Jackson's Moonwalker

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1990.

In *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker*, "Jacko" walks through five fun stages (Club 30, Street, Woods, Cavern, and Enemy Hideout), using a boomerang-like hat, magical sparks, and flashy dance moves to battle zombies, spiders, thugs, Dobermans, and other mindless enemies. The objective is to rescue children, which is ironic considering Jackson's subsequent legal troubles. Includes moonwalking, cameos by Bubbles the chimp, and solid renditions of "Smooth Criminal," "Beat It," "Billie Jean," "Another Part of Me," and "Bad." The game lacks the three-player simultaneous mode and isometric perspective of its more combat-intensive coin-op counterpart (Sega, 1990). Also released for the SMS.

Mick & Mack as the Global Gladiators

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Virgin Games. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Though you wouldn't know it at first glance, *Global Gladiators* is an environmentally themed game with a McDonald's license. After selecting Mick or Mack, players run, jump, and dash through four worlds (Slime World, Mystical Forest, Toxi-Town, and Arctic World), using a six-way GooShooter to blast skunks, slime, trashcans, yetis, and other enemies. Collecting at least 30 Golden Arches grants entrance to the next stage while finding 75 or more unlocks a bonus game where players catch falling garbage and place it in recycling

bins. Boasting over 1250 character animations, *Global Gladiators* looks and plays surprisingly well.

Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft. Developer: Traveler's Tales. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Released the same year as such remarkable platformers as *Donkey Kong Country*, *The Lion King*, and *Earthworm Jim*, *Mickey Mania* holds its own by letting players guide Disney's famous mouse through six levels (there are 25 stages in all), each based on an historical Mickey Mouse animated film: *Steamboat Willie* (1928, in glorious black-and-white), *The Mad Doctor* (1933), *Moose Hunters* (1937), *The Lonesome Ghosts* (1937), *Mickey and the Beanstalk* (1947), and *The Prince and the Pauper* (1990). The controls are simple (not to mention spot-on excellent), but gameplay is challenging, thanks in part to light puzzle elements and such obstacles as wrecking balls, collapsing bridges, exploding skeletons, bubbling liquid, rolling barrels, and falling tree branches. In addition to dodging obstacles, Mickey runs, jumps, ducks, climbs stairs (during a sequence that evokes *Tower Toppler*), swings on ropes, rides a gurney and a raft, runs away from a moose (toward the screen, providing an interesting viewpoint), negotiates moving platforms, and throws marbles at such enemies as bats, ghosts, spiders, parrots, beetles, dragonflies, and Pete, his arch-nemesis. Cartoon-like, musical, and variety-filled, *Mickey Mania* is an entertaining and beautiful adventure with incredible animation (Disney animators helped bring the game to life). Also released for the SNES (with inexplicable load times between stages) and Sega CD (with more voice effects and an extra stage).

Mickey's Ultimate Challenge

Publisher: Hi Tech Expressions. Developer: Designer Software. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1994.

Mickey's Ultimate Challenge consists of five agreeable (if shallow) puzzles games, each

with three difficulty levels (cake, medium, and challenging), making for an all-ages title. In Horace's Library, books move up and down like platforms, and Mickey must jump on the books marked with letters to spell out a word. Daisy's Art Gallery finds Mickey riding and climbing up and down a ladder, using a feather duster to clean paintings to uncover matching pairs. To lower Huey, Dewey and Louie's Drawbridge (a *Simon*-influenced memory game), Mickey must jump on several pumps in the correct sequence that they lit up (this continues for a while, adding a step each time). In Goofy's Blacksmith Shop, Mickey uses a hammer to pound out answers as he guesses what tools (and in what order) are in Goofy's tool box. Finally, Donald's Wizard Tower is a top-down maze puzzler in which a shrunken Mickey pushes potions around a chess board and into a magic mirror. After completing all five challenges, Mickey (or Minnie, if the gamer has elected to play as Mickey's gal pal) will climb a beanstalk. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES.

Micro Machines

Publisher: Codemasters. Developer: Codemasters. Miniature/Radio Control Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Viewed from overhead, *Micro Machines* is a nicely detailed, wildly inventive game that lets players select from nine different vehicles (including sports cars, helicopters, power boats, monster trucks, and combat tanks that can fire shells) and nine different racing environments (including a garage, a bathtub, a breakfast table, and a pool table). There are 32 tracks in all. One-player races are against three computer-controlled cars while two-player games feature head-to-head action. There are 11 characters to compete against, each with his or her own skill level. The controls are simple, the racing action is fun and variety-filled, and the game makes creative use of cereal, glue, a toy shovel, books, and other commonplace items. Includes tournament mode. Based on the line of Galoob toys. Also released for the NES, GB, GG, and SNES. Followed by numerous sequels, including *Micro Machines 64 Turbo* (N64) and *Micro Machines 1 and 2: Twin Turbo* (GBC). Unlicensed.

Midnight Resistance

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

A port of Data East's 1989 arcade game of the same name (which was a follow-up to *Heavy Barrel*), *Midnight Resistance* for the Genesis lacks the rotary control of the coin-op semi-classic and is missing the two-player simultaneous mode. In addition, the graphics aren't quite as colorful. The run-and-gun shooting action is largely intact, however, outfitting hero Johnny Ford with a variety of weapons, including a machine gun, a flame-thrower, and three-way fire. Certain enemies, when shot, emit keys that players can use for purchasing weapon upgrades and other items. *Midnight Resistance* is a decent shooter, but it can't hold a candle to *Contra*, which it tries so hard to emulate. (The original *Contra* isn't available for the Genesis, but *Contra: Hard Corps* is a solid alternative).

MiG-29 Fighter Pilot

Publisher: Domark. Developer: The Kremlin. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1993.

Viewed from inside a Russian-built MiG-29 fighter (the view screen takes up the top half of the playfield while the lower half displays a functional instrument panel), this game challenges players to five missions: Red Witch, Blue Sea-Sprite, Yellow Dragon, White Pegasus, and Iron Hand. Gameplay, which offers eight different perspectives on the action, consists of taking off, landing, rescuing a submarine, dropping flares and chaff to confuse enemies, engaging in dogfights, and annihilating bridges, hangars, trains, helicopters, oil rigs, control towers, a command control system, and more. One operation has players searching a desert to destroy 31 scud missiles while another takes place at night. The fighter players pilot is equipped with a cannon, rockets, and air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles while the instrument panel depicts radar, thrust indicator, altimeter, fuel gauge, compass, and more. The game, which has a slow frame rate, but is suitably complex, is set in the Middle East, but with fictional countries and characters. Six-button controller recommended.

Might and Magic: Gates to Another World

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: New World Computing. First-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

The sequel to the computer game *Might and Magic Book One: The Secret of the Inner Sanctum* (which was released for the NES as *Might & Magic: The Secret of the Inner Sanctum*), *Gates to Another World* is a massive and complex game boasting more than 250 types of weapons, 96 combat and exploration spells, 250 different types of monsters to engage in text-based battles, and more than 100 hours of gameplay. Six-character parties are formed from eight different classes (knight, paladin, archer, cleric, sorcerer, robber, barbarian, and ninja), with each character aging and learning various skills as the adventure wears on. Followed by numerous sequels, including *Warriors of Might and Magic* (GBC) and *Crusaders of Might and Magic* (PSX).

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Banpresto. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Much different than the SNES and Game Boy side-scrollers of the same name, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* for the Genesis is tournament-style fighting patterned after such titles as *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter II*. Gamers select one of six Power Rangers (including Green Ranger, who must be earned) for use in battling Cyclopsis, Goldar, Mino-taur, Madam Woe, and other Rita Repulsa henchmen. Each character has his or her own special moves (power sword, spinning axe, thunder lance, and the like), and a two-player option offers enemies as playable combatants. Also released for the Game Gear. The Sega CD version of *MMPR* is an interactive movie.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Banpresto. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Despite starring the same central villain (Ivan Ooze), the Genesis version of *Mighty*

Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie is much more faithful to the feature film (1995) than its SNES counterpart. As one of six different Power Rangers (each equipped with a weapon and a special charge attack), players must punch, jump, and kick (though not ski or surf like in the SNES game) their way through six levels filled with Ooze Men, the Putty Patrol, and the occasional boss (Goldar, the three Scarlet Sentinels, and Ivan himself). In addition, there are one-on-one Zord battles, which the SNES rendition lacks. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear.

Mike Ditka Power Football

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Ballistic. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Mike Ditka Power Football includes the following features: injuries and substitutions (rarities for the era); a playbook editor; instant replays; 32-man rosters; 28 fictional teams (which are based on real NFL teams); a behind-the-kicker perspective for field goals; and four passing modes. There are three primary modes of play (Single Game, Final Drive, and Championship Playoffs), each called via digitized voice effects by former NFL referee Jim Tunney. Former Chicago Bears coach Mike Ditka provides useless, text-based scouting reports prior to each game, and the gridiron action is displayed by way of an angled/elevated view of a vertically scrolling field. More important from an historical standpoint than as a playable game, *Mike Ditka Power Football* was one of the earlier 16-bit football titles. The best thing about the game is the box art, which was painted by the great Boris Vallejo. Ditka also lent his name to *Quarterback Attack with Mike Ditka*, which was released for the 3DO and the Saturn.

Minnesota Fats: Pool Legend

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Sports/Billiards, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Challenge the legendary Minnesota Fats (and five fictional players) in this top-notch, top-down (view) pool simulator for the Gen-

esis. After the mode of play (Story, Tournament, or Versus) is selected, a lag shot will determine who goes first. When preparing for a shot, players can rotate the cue, adjust the power, and determine the strike position, meaning spin can be put on the ball. Players can even make the ball jump. Within the Tournament and Versus modes, players can select from eight-ball, nine-ball, one-pocket, rotation, and other variations. A Trick mode is also available. The Saturn version is enhanced with full-motion video.

The Miracle Piano Teaching System

Publisher: The Software Toolworks. Developer: The Software Toolworks. Musical Instrument/Band Simulator, 1 player. 1992.

Packaged with a full-sized electronic keyboard, which is enhanced with two speakers for stereo sound, *Miracle Piano Teaching System* teaches gamers how to play the titular instrument. As players pound away at the pressure sensitive keys, onscreen keys flash to mimic the movements of the real keys. A variety of drills, musical numbers, and games (such as shooting ducks and creating a bridge for a robot) enable players to practice music notation, fingering techniques, pedaling, and more. In addition, the keyboard is equipped with more than 100 virtual musical instruments and other sounds, including guitars, drums, and voice effects. This hard-to-find game was also released for the NES and SNES.

MLBPA Baseball

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A solid, arcade-style baseball game, *MLBPA Baseball*, as the title indicates, was licensed by the Major League Baseball Player's Association, meaning virtually all of the real-life big leaguers are included. The lack of MLB licensing means team names and logos aren't used, but the players (which are large) wear their respective colors and play for their respective cities (there are 28 teams in all). Player statistics and ratings are based on the 1993 season. Highlighted by a 162-game Season mode,

the game is replete with features that hardball fans will appreciate, including rundowns, bad hops, booted balls, the double switch, cutoff plays, snap throws, authentic stadium music, and digitized scoreboard animations (in the Super Nintendo version, the scoreboard animations are NOT digitized, meaning all you see is player silhouettes). The batting view is from behind the plate. When the ball gets hit, the view switches to a $\frac{3}{4}$ overhead perspective. The controls are simple and intuitive, and players can steer pitches. Battery backup saves progress (the SNES version uses passwords). Also released for the Game Gear.

Monopoly

Publisher: Parker Brothers. Developer: Magical Company. Board Game, 1–8 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Parker Brothers' famous board game is recreated very nicely for the Sega Genesis. Up to eight players take turns rolling dice (with a digitized hand), moving a token around the board, earning money, drawing Community Chest and Chance cards, and trying to bankrupt the other players by purchasing, renting, and selling houses, hotels, railroads, and other properties. The advantage of the video version lies in the computer handling all the accounting and money management tasks, giving the game a faster pace than its more tangible, more tactile counterpart. Cartoon-like animations, a game editor (for giving players cash and properties before the game even begins), voice effects, an auctioneer (who runs property sales), and a timed mode add to the fun. Interestingly, the Sega Master System version of *Monopoly* is enhanced with battery backup and lets up to 10 players in on the action. Also released for the NES, GB, SNES, and numerous other systems.

Mortal Kombat

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A legendary home release, *Mortal Kombat* for the Genesis hit the streets September, 13th, 1993, a day that went down in infamy as

“Mortal Monday.” Not only was the cart a port of a hot, controversial arcade game (Midway, 1992), it helped usher in the age of video game ratings, thanks to its blood and gore. The one-on-one fighting evokes *Street Fighter II*, but with digitized graphics, a Shaolin Tournament storyline, and a more violent presentation, such as the highly popular Fatality moves, which let players finish off their opponents by ripping out their spine or another such gruesome maneuver. Gamers can fight as one of seven different characters: Johnny Cage, Liu Kang, Sonya Blade, Kano, Raiden, Sub-Zero, or Scorpion, each with his or her own special moves, such as fireballs, lightning, or shadow kicks. The SNES game has better graphics and voice effects, but the Genesis version excels in gameplay (six-button controller recommended). More importantly (at least to consumers at the time), the Genesis game has a blood code (ABACABB) that the SNES game lacks (the “blood” in the SNES game is gray sweat). Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and Sega CD, the latter version augmented with new animations and superior sound. Remade for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Mortal Kombat II

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Based on Midway’s 1993 arcade game, *Mortal Kombat II* for the Genesis, like the first *Mortal Kombat*, is missing certain voice effects from the coin-op classic, and the digitized graphics aren’t as sharp. These are small gripes, however, as this is a great game. The one-on-one tournament fighting returns from *MK*, but this time there are 12 fighters to select from, including Reptile and new characters Baraka, Jax Briggs, Kitana, Kung Lao, and Mileena. Other improvements to the formula include more special attacks, better coloring, superior controls, and blood and gore already in place without the need of entering a code (giving it an M-17 rating). There are more finishing moves this time out, including the creatively amusing Friendships (kindness exhibited towards the opponent) and Babalities (turning the opponent into a baby). The SNES version

also has blood and gore, but with better graphics, making it the more desirable of the two versions. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, Saturn, and Sega 32X.

Mortal Kombat 3

Publisher: Williams Entertainment. Developer: Sculptured Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

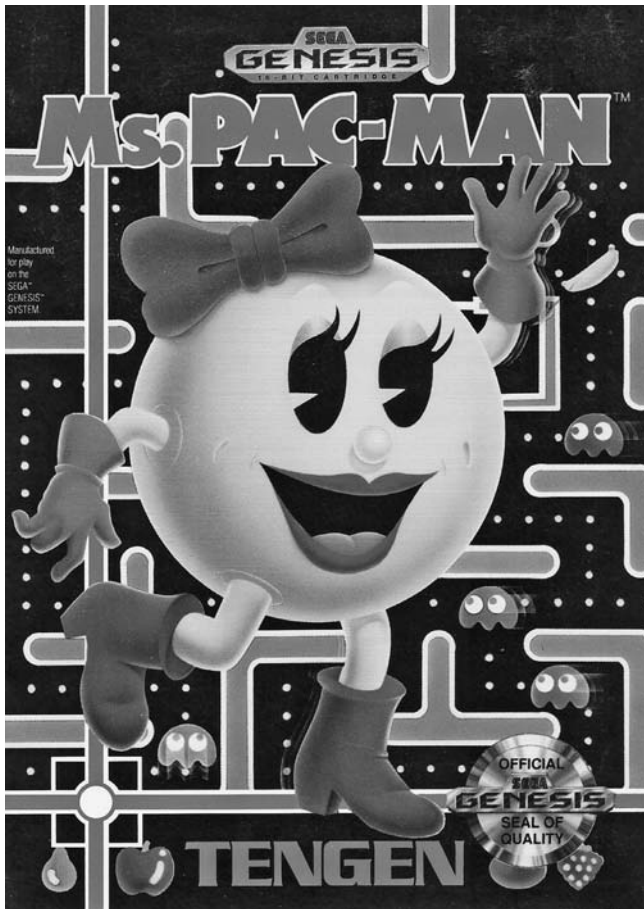
Although faster than its progenitors, *Mortal Kombat 3* has much of what gamers came to expect from the one-on-one fighting series, including hidden characters, finishing moves (Animalities are now part of the mix), high and low punches, high and low kicks, flying kicks, flips, jumps, foot sweeps, roundhouse kicks, and a variety of special moves. A run button has been added, as have chain combos, and gamers can now select from 14 fighters, including newbies Cyrax, Kabal, Nightwolf, Sektor, Sindel, Stryker, and Sheeva, the latter of whom is a tough, four-armed opponent. Unfortunately, Raiden, Johnny Cage, Reptile, and Scorpion didn’t make the cut. Also, the inclusion of cyborgs and urban American areas veer the game away from its mystical/oriental roots. One flashy, attention-grabbing addition is the bi-level battlefield ability to smash an opponent up or down to another screen. Based on Midway’s 1995 arcade game. Six-button controller recommended. Also released for the GB, PSX, and SNES. Followed by: *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3* (arcade, Genesis, SNES, Saturn).

Ms. Pac-Man

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Innerprise Software. Maze, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1991.

Ms. Pac-Man for the Genesis includes a fairly accurate port of Midway’s 1981 arcade classic, but it also offers a host of unconventional features, including the use of a Pac Booster, which makes Ms. Pac-Man and Pac-Man (who player two controls in simultaneous mode) move faster and leave speed streaks in their wake. Other unorthodox options include: a pair of rousingly good two-player simultaneous modes (Cooperative and Competitive); four difficulty levels (Easy, Normal, Hard, and

Crazy); and 36 different mazes, including Big, Strange, Arcade, and Mini, the latter of which cuts down on vertical scrolling. The NES (Tengen version) and Super NES renditions of *Ms. Pac-Man* also boast these special (and largely cool) features. For the two or three of you who don't know, *Ms. Pac-Man* has players guiding the titular femme around a maze, gobbling up pellets while avoiding four ghosts. Eating bouncing fruit grants bonus points while gobbling Power Pellets lets *Ms. Pac-Man* temporarily turn the tables on the ghosts. Also released (without gimmicky options) for the Atari 2600, Atari 5200, Game Boy, and numerous other systems. Followed by: *Ms. Pac-Man: Maze Madness* (PlayStation, various).



Ms. Pac-Man for the Genesis includes a nice port of the 1981 coin-op classic, but ups the ante considerably with a variety of new features, including 36 different mazes.

Muhammad Ali Heavyweight Boxing

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Float like a butterfly and sting like a bee with *Muhammad Ali Heavyweight Boxing*. The ring is viewed from the side, and the screen scrolls/rotates 360-degrees to follow the free-flowing (relative to the genre) action. There are nine fictional pugilists to select from, plus Ali himself. Other features and options include: number of rounds (up to 15); number of referee counts (up to 10); two control types (arcade and simulation); digitized sound effects and speech (including the voice of Muhammad Ali); and two modes of play (Exhibition and

Tournament). Each fighter has a power bar and a speed bar, both of which decrease as the fighter gets tired or hurt. Decreased bars make fighters slower and weaker (to the point of getting knocked down). If a fight ends without a knockout, punches landed will determine the winner (onscreen counters show the amount for both boxers). The game looks fantastic and has excellent controls. Also released for the Game Boy.

MUSHA

Publisher: Seismic Software. Developer: Compile. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

MUSHA, which stands for Metallic Uniframe Super Hybrid Armor, is hard to find, but easily worth the search, thanks to intense gameplay, a sophisticated weapons system, multiple endings, and amazing graphics (highlighted by scaling, parallax scrolling, and gorgeous backgrounds). Players guide the titular flying robot through seven fun-filled levels (including one where the floor drops out from beneath you), firing away at an impressive

variety of enemies (including gigantic bosses). The game melds traditional Japanese imagery with contemporary sci-fi, creating an unusual and fascinating look. Often misspelled “M.U.S.H.A.,” *MUSHA* was followed by *Robo Aleste* for the Sega CD.

Mutant League Football

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Mutant Productions. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Mutant League Football is similar to (but not as polished as) the early *Madden* titles in terms of barebones gameplay. However, as the title suggests, the game adds a number of fun creature features to the football formula. The 16 teams are comprised of aliens, robots, skeletons, super-humans, and trolls with such names as Scary Ice (Jerry Rice), Bones Jackson (Bo Jackson), and Reggie Fright (Reggie White). Gamers play on a variety of unorthodox field surfaces, including desert, space rock, space ice, and rubber. There are 19 fields total, each riddled with such hazards as rocks, mines, fire pits, abysses, and thin ice. In addition, gamers can bribe the refs (who call such penalties as vomiting and picking boogers), kill the halftime marching band, and select from more than 50 plays, including: QB smash; electrocute; quarterback bombs (the bombs actually detonate); rocket pack (the running back wears a jet backpack); and run blast (the running back can throw dynamite). Body parts fly in this rowdy, funny, rough-and-tumble, decidedly irreverent, gridiron game.

Mutant League Hockey

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Abalone/Mutant Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Although not as good as *Mutant League Football*, *Mutant League Hockey* features the same type of fun, violent, over-the-top action. Players skate robots, skeletons, and trolls around the rink, using axes, mallets, chainsaws, exploding pucks, and other weapons to battle the opponent while trying to score goals. Hazards to watch for include thin ice, sharks, fire, mines, and spikes. Twenty three teams are

available, with each player on each team rated according to speed, stamina, skating ability, power, fighting, and other attributes. Penalties can be turned on or off as can player substitutions. The game advertises a basketball addition to the *Mutant League* lineup, but that cartridge never materialized and the series, unfortunately, ended here.

Mystic Defender

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

The sequel to *SpellCaster* for the SMS, *Mystic Defender* lacks the RPG elements of its progenitor, but is nevertheless a satisfying adventure. Players assume the role of Joe Yamato, who must run and jump through eight levels of play (including Lava Lake, Spider Pit, and Elevator Maze) to rescue the beautiful Alexandra. To battle the requisite monsters, Joe uses four types of magic — psycho, flame, sonic, and thunder dragon — each of which can be charged up in *R-Type*-like fashion. Both *SpellCaster* and *Mystic Defender* are based on the Japanese anime, *Peacock King Kujakuo*.

Mystical Fighter

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: Kid. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Forgoing the dark urban environment common to the beat-'em-up genre, *Mystical Fighter* is set in Feudal Japan, with players assuming the role of a martial artist who can punch, kick, jump, use weapons (a jitte and a boomerang-like fan), and command five types of magic: gong, lightning, earthquake, snowstorm, and ghost warrior. To battle the swordsmen, ninjas, sumo fighters, crows, and samurai zombies that roam the fairly straightforward levels, players can also perform the following moves: front flip jump kick, rolling attack, sliding kick, standard throw, spin throw, and reverse drop. Gameplay is slowly paced (the music is much faster than the game itself), and pallet-swapping among the enemies is used with alarming frequency. Other points of interest include: each enemy has a health bar (not just the bosses); players can enter hidden areas

through waterfalls; level four contains annoying, Intellivision-esque fog effects; eating sushi replenishes health; and the first few bosses can be defeated through simple button-mashing. *Mystical Fighter* is playable, but *Streets of Rage* certainly has nothing to fear.

NBA Action '94

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Basketball, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1994.

NBA Action '94 boasts 27 NBA teams from the 1993–94 season. In addition, there are 30 legends (such as Dr. J, Bill Walton, and Bob Cousy) comprising three Hall of Fame teams. Players can engage in exhibition hoops or commit to a 20-, 40-, or 82-game season. Three types of playoffs are included: single elimination, best of five, and best of seven. The action is viewed from an isometric perspective, with the court rotating each time the ball crosses the half-court line. Marv Albert is on hand to provide color commentary. Other features and options include: fouls, player fatigue, instant replays, a shot chart, team stats, league standings, adjustable quarters, and three offensive plays: pick/screen, clear out, and double screen. Released the same year as *NBA Action* for the Game Gear.

NBA Action '95 Starring David Robinson

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Double Diamond Sports. Sports/Basketball, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Eschewing the isometric perspective of *NBA Action '94*, this game offers an unusual top-down vertical view (dubbed “fast-breaking view” on the packaging), making the smaller players look ridiculously short. The game offers loads of features and options, including trades, drafts, free agent signings, adjustable fouls, three different skill levels, instant replays, shortened seasons, a turbo button, fatigue, injuries, substitutions, and 300 NBA players (with stats and ratings based on the 1994–95 season). Famed broadcaster Marv Albert returns to provide such color commentary as “from downtown” during three-pointers and his patented “yes!” after made shots.

NBA Action '95 Starring David Robinson tends to be glitchy, but it offers some entertaining (and at times ridiculous), arcade-style gameplay. Followed by *NBA Action* (Saturn) and *NBA Action 98* (Saturn).

NBA All-Star Challenge

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Beam Software. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

One of the highlights of the basketball season every year is the NBA All-Star Weekend, which rivals the Super Bowl in terms of glitz, glamour, and media coverage. Unfortunately, *NBA All-Star Challenge* fails to live up to its much-ballyhooed real-life event since the Slam Dunk Contest and NBA All-Star Game itself are absent. However, players can go at it in a game of One-On-One (including a Tournament mode), which evokes the classic computer title *Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-On-One*. There are three other modes, each of which is essentially a mini-game: Free Throw Contest, 3 Point Shootout, and H.O.R.S.E. Aiming is tough, and it's funny to contemplate such giants as Dikembe Mutombo and Patrick Ewing raining threes. There are 27 NBA stars from which to choose (one from each team from the 1991–92 season), including such legends as Larry Bird, Karl Malone, Dominique Wilkins, and Clyde Drexler. The players do resemble their flesh-and-blood counterparts to some degree. Also released for the Game Boy and SNES. Followed by: *NBA All-Star Challenge 2* (Game Boy).

NBA HangTime

Publisher: Midway. Developer: Funcom Oslo A/S. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

A nice port of Midway's 1996 arcade game, *NBA HangTime* was created by the original Midway *NBA Jam* design team, but the name was changed due to Acclaim assuming ownership of the *NBA Jam* moniker with their home releases. The two-on-two action is similar, but gamers select from 145 star players spread across 29 NBA teams. Also, the players are bigger, and the graphics are better (though the

game lacks the player scaling of its coin-op cousin). More strikingly, gamers can now create their own player, using such “parts” as uniform, name, height, weight, power, shooting skill, defensive skill, and head (including a clown head and an alien head). By winning games and/or answering trivia questions, players can make their character more powerful. Other features include fade-away jumpers, spin moves, alley oops, and double dunks. Hitting three alley oops or double dunks in a row makes both players catch fire. As with *NBA Jam* and *NBA Jam Tournament Edition*, the game is loaded with secrets and hidden players. The SNES version has slightly better controls, sounds, and graphics than the Genesis game. Also released for the N64 and PSX. Followed by: *NBA Maximum HangTime* (arcade).

NBA Jam

Publisher: Arena. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

While it owes some allegiance to Bally/Midway’s *Arch Rivals* (arcade, 1989), Midway’s *NBA Jam* (arcade, 1993) popularized the notion of arcade-style, over-the-top sports, influencing such subsequent franchises as *MLB Slugfest*, *NHL Hitz*, and *NFL Blitz*. The Genesis version of the arcade classic keeps the simple, two-on-two, side-view action largely intact, with players raining down threes and flying high above the rim to perform a variety of outrageous slam dunks. Goal tending is verboten, and there’s a 24-second clock, but there are no fouls or free throws, meaning players can shove one another with impunity. Sinking three baskets in a row without another player scoring sets the hot player “on fire,” which allows him to goal-tend and makes his shots even more likely to go in. Other fun features include: turbo boosts, a lively announcer, saveable records and stats, hidden power-ups and players (including Bill Clinton), and 27 NBA teams, each comprised of two of their best players (with some notable absences, including Michael Jordan). The SNES version has slightly better controls and graphics, but both versions are great fun. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and Sega CD, the latter with load

times, better music, and video clips. Updated for the Xbox, Xbox 360, PS2, PS3, and Wii.

NBA Jam Tournament Edition

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Tournament Edition features the same type of highly entertaining two-on-two action of the original *NBA Jam*. However, there are a number of extra features, including: nine new dunks; rookie and all-star teams; more secret surprises and hidden players (such as Larry Bird); player substitutions after every quarter (adding some strategy to the arcade-style format); Hot Spots on the court (random areas denoted by circles that are worth more points); and power-ups to grab, including faster speed, unlimited turbo, dunking from anywhere, and the ability to cause an earthquake. Each of the 27 NBA teams now includes three players, and players must select two of them before starting play. Michael Jordan is still absent, but such superstars as Scottie Pippen, Dominique Wilkins, and Hakeem Olajuwon are featured. Based on Midway’s 1993 coin-op, this fantastically fun game was upgraded for the 32X with player scaling, bigger players, and smoother animation. Also released for the GG, GB, SNES, Saturn, Jaguar, and PSX.

NBA Live 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Hitmen Productions. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The follow-up to *NBA Showdown '94*, *NBA Live 95* kicked off the critically acclaimed *Live* series and set a new standard for basketball video games. The game trumps *Showdown* with a host of new features, including passing in mid-air, slow motion dunks, rockin’ tunes, a turbo button, and, most distinctively, a 30-degree perspective that opens up the view of the court. Other features include: TV-style presentation, digitized photo-enhanced starting lineup intros, three difficulty levels, four defensive sets, 46 offensive plays, humorous player animations (such as finger-pointing after dunks), and player and user stats saved

via battery backup. All 27 NBA teams are featured, plus two All-Star and four custom squads. Modes of play include Exhibition, Playoffs, and Season. The game looks great, sporting recognizable renderings of such stars as Penny Hardaway and Patrick Ewing. *NBA Live 95* boasts fast, fun, five-on-five action that has held up remarkably well over the years. The SNES version of *NBA Live 95* lets up to five gamers compete.

NBA Live 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Hitmen Productions. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

NBA Live 96 offers much of the same terrific gameplay as *NBA Live 95*, but includes the following new features: on-the-fly play calling, animated play diagrams, trivia, spin moves, crowd chants, interactive crowd free throw action, tip slams, power dunks, and, most notably, the ability for users to create their own players (potentially making room for such unauthorized legends as Michael Jordan and Larry Bird). Other fun additions include alley oops, blocked dunks, savable stats (via battery backup), player drafts and trades, mid-air passing, turbo-charged fast breaks, and three modes of play: Exhibition, Playoffs, and Season. All 29 NBA teams are featured (including expansion clubs Toronto and Vancouver), plus two All-Star and four custom teams. There are more than 60 offensive plays and 10 defensive sets to choose from. The game looks great, sporting recognizable renditions of such stars as Chris Webber, Jason Kidd, and Mitch Richmond. The SNES version of *NBA Live 96* lets up to five gamers compete. Also released for the GB and PSX.

NBA Live 97

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: NuFX/Hitmen Productions. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

This third game in the ubiquitous *NBA Live* series is similar to its predecessors, but it does include some noteworthy (if less than groundbreaking) new features, including: larger players; reverse layups and dunks; manual steal

controls (steals were performed automatically in earlier iterations); a player lock feature (which lets you control the same player the entire game); updated rosters (to reflect the 1996–97 season); and four new modes of play: 2-on-2 and 3-on-3 half court games; and Shoot Out and 3-Point competitions. All 29 NBA teams are featured (comprising more than 300 players, including Shaquille O’Neal), plus two All-Star and four custom teams. *GamePro* magazine once called *NBA Live 97* “The best Genesis basketball game of all time.” Also released for the PSX (for up to eight players), Saturn (for up to 10 players), and SNES (for up to five players).

NBA Live 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: NuFX/Tiertex. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1997.

Released late in the life of the Genesis, this is the fourth and final *NBA Live* game for the 16-bit system. The gameplay is essentially the same, featuring TV-style presentation, creatable players, customizable rules (for goal tending and the like), NBA stars, three difficulty levels, dynamic five-on-five action, a 30-degree view of the court, and battery backup for saving stats, season progress, roster moves, and custom teams. *NBA Live 98* does add a few new flourishes to the formula, however, including team and player practice modes, a more realistic trading mode incorporating player ratings, and a CPU-generated mid-season All-Star game culled from the top performers throughout the league. All 300 players (spread over 29 teams) have been updated to reflect the 1997–98 NBA Season. Also released for the PSX (for up to eight players), Saturn (for up to eight players), and SNES (for up to five players). Followed by: *NBA Live 2006* (PS2, PSP, Xbox, GC) and other sequels.

NBA Showdown ’94

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: EA Creative Development. Sports/Basketball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Following *Lakers versus Celtics*, *Bulls versus Lakers*, and *Bulls versus Blazers*, *NBA Showdown ’94* was the fourth game in the popular

Electronic Arts hoops series. The game has a new engine, resulting in faster gameplay, tighter defense, and more than a dozen new signature dunks (such as Shawn Kemp's Swing Arm Slam). Other options and features include: a fancy new scoreboard; player rankings in 14 skill categories; the ability for gamers to call offensive and defensive plays on the fly; customizable 16-team tournaments; and full and reduced season play based on the 1993-94 schedule. Battery backup lets gamers create and save up to four teams, along with offering saved player stats, team standings, and customized team rosters. The elevated view of the five-on-five action is from the side (with horizontal scrolling to show the entire court), but free throws are seen from behind the shooter. Michael Jordan is absent, but the game features numerous NBA superstars, including Shaquille O'Neal. Released for the Super NES as the two-player *NBA Show-down*. Followed by: *NBA Live 95*.

NCAA Final Four Basketball

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Bitmasters. Sports/Basketball, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

This was the first college basketball game for the Genesis. Sixty-four NCAA Division I teams are featured, including such powerhouses as Duke and Kansas. Three modes of play are available: Practice (two players and the ball, no defense); Exhibition (a single game against two teams); and Tournament (take one team as far as possible in hopes of reaching the Final Four and beyond). Plus, gamers can practice their free throw shooting skills in a special mode that is viewed from behind the player's head. Other features and options include: dunks, jump shots, bank shots, fake shots, fake jumps, player fatigue, instant replays, six defensive formations (including man, zone, and full court press), intentional fouls, variable foul calling (none, easy going, or strict), and adjustable game length (10, 20, 30, or 40 minutes). Also released for the SNES.

NCAA Football

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: The Software Toolworks. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

NCAA Football offers up 40 Division 1A teams, each sporting real team colors and logos. The greatest teams from the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s are featured. Modes of play include: Exhibition, which lets players pick any two teams for a game against a friend or the computer; and Tournament, which involves taking a team through 16 games in hopes of winning the Championship. The scrolling, top-down action runs horizontally, and there are more than 60 plays, including such college staples as the wishbone and the suicide blitz. To pass the ball, players should cycle through to the preferred receiver, who, after catching the ball, can run, spin, lateral, or dive. While on defense, gamers should switch control to the closest player to make a tackle. Other features include variable weather conditions, adjustable quarter lengths, and instant replays. Similar to *Tecmo Super Bowl*, *NCAA Football* was also released for the SNES.

New Horizons

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Role-Playing Game/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

Frequently referred to as "Uncharted Waters 2: New Horizons," this sequel to *Uncharted Waters* lets gamers portray six different characters, each with different objectives, such as finding Atlantis or defeating the Spanish Navy. There's even a female pirate, who seeks to avenge the loss of her fiancé and her brother. The action, which has players sailing the open seas, battling fleets (turn-based), engaging in sword fights (side-view), playing blackjack, bartering for goods, and much more, takes place in the 16th century. More expansive than *Uncharted Waters* (Genesis, NES, SNES), *New Horizons* includes more than 180 treasures to find, the potential for building a fleet containing 25 historical ships, and more than 130 ports to visit. Similar to *Sid Meier's Pirates!*, *New Horizons* was also released for the SNES.

Newman-Haas IndyCar featuring Nigel Mansell

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Viewed from the driver's seat, this game is endorsed by the titular racing team (which was formed by actor Paul Newman and racer Carl Haas) and by British CART Indy Car World Series winner Nigel Mansell. Gamers can practice in a single race, attempt to qualify (two laps), or take on 12 other drivers on 15 tracks (most of which are in North America, and most of which are ovals with extra curves). Arcade and Simulation modes are included, as are manual and automatic controls and a two-player split-screen mode (which reduces the frame rate to the point of distraction). In addition to trying to race past opponents, players must refuel and dodge such obstacles as road signs, buildings, and other cars. Too many crashes damages the car beyond drivability. Overall, *Newman-Haas IndyCar featuring Nigel Mansell* is a decent racer with a clumsy title. The graphics, which feature polygonal buildings and nicely drawn cars, are hit-and-miss, the sounds are forgettable, and the gameplay is just so-so. Also released for the SNES.

NFL '95

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Double Diamond Sports. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

NFL '95 is the sequel to *NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Montana*, but without Joe's name in the title (though it is on the title screen, and his picture is on the box). A new viewing angle — intended to improve the passing game — lets players see up to 65 yards down the field, and players can now choose to play as the receiver in order to run a specific route and then signal for the pass. Once a receiver or a running back has the ball, the camera zooms in for a close-up. Other features include: free agents, all 28 NFL teams, instant replays, trades, injuries, multiple schedules, and more than 1,500 NFL players rated according to 13 different categories (based on the 1993 season). Unfortunately, Sports Talk is gone, meaning there is no the play-by-play commentary. Followed by: *Prime Time NFL Starring Deion Sanders*.

NFL 98

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Spectacular Games. Sports/Football, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1997.

The final Sega-published gridiron game for the Genesis, *NFL 98* uses the same engine found in the previous game in the series, *Prime Time NFL Starring Deion Sanders*. Luckily, there are some new features, including a Practice mode, the ability to play a full 1997 schedule, in-game instructions and rules, and updated player stats and ratings. More noteworthy is the option to customize the abilities of your team or the computer-controlled team in a variety of areas, including: aggressiveness, injuries, pass accuracy, pass deflections, cause interceptions, pass interference, blocking, defensive tackling, offensive fumbles, player speed, dive effect, speed burst effect, kick meter, and CPU kicking accuracy. Gone is the option to play multiple season schedules. In addition to the 30 NFL teams, players can select from AFC and NFC Star teams, an NFL All-Pro team, and six regional squads based on where the players went to college.

NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Montana

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Blue Sky Software. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The follow-up to *NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana*, this game offers a new behind-the-quarterback view, giving the player a total of six different perspectives (of a vertical field). In addition to the improved passing game, players can now pull off speed bursts. Other features include: all 28 NFL teams, audibles, screen passes, diving catches, 360-degree spins, Sports Talk voice effects, team play books, instant replays, and a zooming camera. There are more than 800 real NFL players, including such superstars as Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Barry Sanders, and Jerry Rice. Players are rated according to six categories: accuracy, agility, blocking, hands, rushing, speed, strength, and tackling. Gamers can play a full 16-game season, the playoffs, and the Super Bowl. Followed by: *NFL '95*.

NFL Quarterback Club

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Sports/Football, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1994.

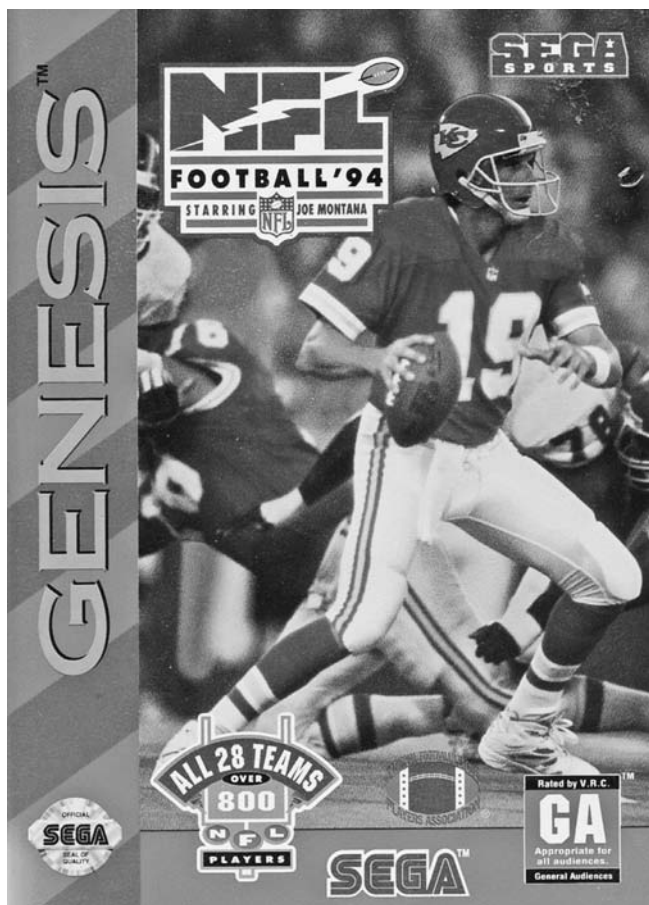
Boasting 24 Megs of power, *NFL Quarterback Club* features 19 quarterbacks from the 1993 season, including such household names as John Elway, Troy Aikman, Dan Marino, and Brett Favre, and such lesser known players as David Klingler and Rick Mirer. The QB Challenge lets players select an NFL quarterback or one of their own design to compete in a series of four events: Distance, Accuracy, Speed and Mobility, and Read and Recognition. In Simulation Mode, players get to recreate and participate in 30 historical NFL scenarios. NFL Play is the meat of the game, offering Preseason,

Season (16 games), Playoffs, and Pro Bowl. Other features and options include: instant replay; variable weather conditions (fair, rain, or snow); grass and artificial turf; official NFL team names and logos; adjustable quarter lengths; three difficulty levels; player animations (showing such moves as spikes, taunts, sacks, and highsteps); and more than 430 offensive, defensive, and QB signature plays. Also released for the SNES and Game Boy, the latter of which only offers the QB Challenge mode. *NFL Quarterback Club* for the 32X was actually a port of *NFL Quarterback Club '96*.

NFL Quarterback Club '96

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Sports/Football, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Like the previous game, *NFL Quarterback Club '96* offers an elevated, behind-the-team view of a vertical field populated by small players, including such greats as Troy Aikman, John Elway, Brett Favre, Dan Marino, and Drew Bledsoe. This time around there are more than 800 plays (up from 430+) to call (including 54 hyper audibles), along with more than 50 playable historical NFL scenarios (up from 30). Gamers can participate in practice, indulge in a full NFL season, or skip ahead to the playoffs. Other options and features include: replays; substitutions; player progress reports; a pre-game show; variable weather conditions; a no-huddle offense; three different camera angles; three different clock speeds; drag tackles; and up and over dives. All 28 NFL teams are customizable. Also released for the SNES, GB, GG, and 32X, the latter of which did not have “’96” in the title. *NFL Quarterback Club II* for the Game Boy was also released in 1995. Followed by: *NFL Quarterback Club '97* (PSX, Saturn), *NFL*



Legendary quarterback Joe Montana is featured on the cover of this popular gridiron game.

Quarterback Club 98 (N64), *NFL Quarterback Club 99* (N64), and *NFL Quarterback Club 2000* (N64, Dreamcast).

NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The follow-up to *Joe Montana Football* and *Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football*, *NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana*, as evidenced by the title, is the first game in the series to sport NFL licensing, meaning gamers play for the Super Bowl (as opposed to the Sega Bowl), and all 28 NFL teams are present. Other features include: four perspectives (horizontal, blimp, vertical offense, and vertical defense); twice as much play-by-play commentary as *Joe Montana II*; a zoom-in camera (as in *Joe Montana II*); weather conditions (fair, rain, snow); three difficulty levels; adjustable quarters (5, 10, or 15 minutes); and selectable venues (natural turf, artificial turf, domed stadium). Augmenting Exhibition and League play is a special Coach mode in which gamers call plays for the computer to run. In addition, players can enlist a friend against the computer or for competitive play. A limited view of the field makes long passes a guessing game, helping make *John Madden Football '93* the preferred choice. Followed by: *NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Montana*.

NHL All-Star Hockey 95

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Following *Mario Lemieux Hockey*, this is the second Sega hockey game for the Genesis. The game boasts 26 NHL teams and 650 players (including such stars as Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky), each rating according to 15 categories (which are savable via battery back-up), and each containing over 1,000 frames of animation. Famed broadcaster Marv Albert provides color commentary throughout the 84-game season. Other modes of play include: Exhibition, Full Season, New Playoffs, and New Playoffs/7 Game. Other features include: fight-

ing, adjustable penalties, speed bursts, instant replay, manual or automatic goalies, one-timers, line changes, and cross checks. The elevated view is from the side, and the rink is horizontal. Playable, but decidedly inferior to *NHL 95*.

NHL Hockey

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Park Place Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Like *John Madden Football*, *NHL Hockey* was an early, highly influential Genesis sports title, helping usher in a new era for sports video games. The overhead view is of a vertical rink, with players selecting from all 22 NHL teams and two All-Star squads. Real player names aren't used, but the fictional players match their real life counterparts pretty well (as in jersey number, for example). Each player is rated according to 14 different attributes, including scoring, skating, aggression, and rink awareness. The action is fast, realistic, and furious as players, competing against one another or co-operating against the computer, pass, fight, slash, hold, trip, body check, and slap shot their way to glorious victory or humiliating defeat (the computer controls the goalies). Additional features include: line changes, a Zamboni machine, adjustable period lengths and skill levels, instant replays, scouting reports, realistic sound effects, and more. Followed by: *NHLPA Hockey*.

NHL '94

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The third game in the series (after *NHL Hockey* and *NHLPA Hockey 93*), *NHL '94* is a widely acclaimed hockey title that is loaded with more than 25 new features, including Shootout mode, manual goalie control, more challenging gameplay, penalty shots, four-player action, and one-timers (quick shots on goal straight from a pass). Audio/visual improvements include new player animations, more involved crowds, smoother graphics, and 72 pieces of organ music from arenas around

the NHL. The only drawback to the game is that the developers removed the blood and fighting. This is the first game in the series to include both NHL and NHLPA licensing. Also released for the SNES and Sega CD, the latter featuring improved sound and more than 100 video clips of NHL stars.

NHL 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

NHL 95 is the fourth game in EA's popular hockey series. This time, players can participate in a full 84-game season. Other new features include: drop passes, trades, fakes, faster gameplay, defenders "laying down on D," new player animations, the ability to create players, and a 2 on 2 Jam mode. Also released for the SNES.

NHL 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

NHL 96 plays a whole lot like *NHL 95*, but is more challenging. New features include: smarter offensive and defensive skaters; tougher goalies; a Stanley Cup ceremony; five-minute major penalties for fighting; new moves (give and go, one-time passing, and spin-o-rama); three difficulty levels (rookie, pro, and all-star); and better graphics and sounds (including the sports anthem "Get Ready for This"). Also released for the SNES.

NHL 97

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

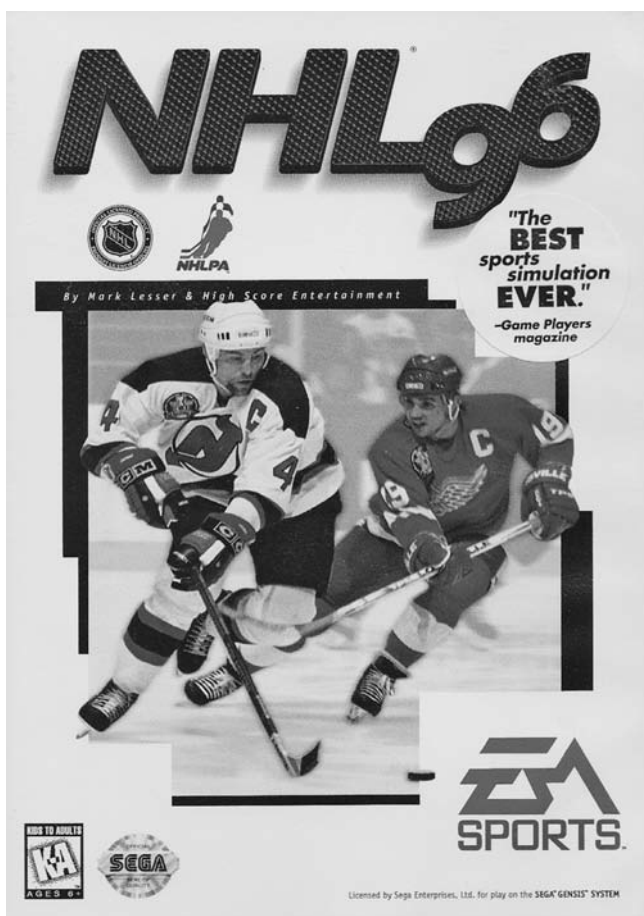
As in *NHL 96*, *NHL 97* lets players select from all 26 NHL

teams, each comprised of full rosters of actual NHL players. However, this game adds teams from Canada and Europe. Other new features include: all-time user records, four simultaneous seasons, 15 fresh signature moves, and a special Skills challenge that tests players in four mini-games: Puck Blast, Rapid Fire, Shooting Accuracy, and Puck Handling Relay. Also re-released for the SNES, PSX, and Saturn.

NHL 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High Score Productions. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1997.

The seventh and final Genesis game in EA's *NHL* series, *NHL 98* is similar to the two previous games, but does include the requisite



NHL 96 is widely regarded as one of the best hockey titles of the era.

new features: enhanced computer AI; player hot and cold streaks; automatic goalie switching; enhanced penalty awareness (including 2 line pass rule); more intelligent crowd reactions; hip checks; a coaching menu (which lets players apply different strategies to different lines); and faster game play (there are three different game speeds total). Also released for the SNES, PSX, and Saturn. Followed by: *NHL 99* (PSX, N64), *NHL 2000* (GBC, PSX), and a string of other sequels.

NHLPA Hockey 93

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: EA Studios. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The follow-up to *NHL Hockey*, *NHLPA Hockey 93*, as the title indicates, was endorsed by the National Hockey League Players Association, meaning the cart includes more than 500 real NHL players. The game plays a lot like *NHL Hockey* (which lacked real player names), but has more than 20 new features, including battery backup, injuries (including blood), accurate player stats, signature moves, a tougher computer opponent, faster goalies that can now dive, and an edit lines feature. Ron Barr covers the action via TV-style presentation. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *NHL '94*.

Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 player. 1993.

Like its Super NES counterpart, *World Championship Racing* for the Genesis has 16 international tracks (with long straightaways and careening twists and turns), pit stops, a variety of weather conditions, car-customizing features (wings, gears, fuel, and tires), and a digital rendition of British racer Nigel Mansell, who pops up during races offering advice and praise. Unfortunately, unlike the first-person SNES game, this version offers a less immersive, more commonplace third-person perspective. In addition, the graphics in the Genesis rendition aren't quite as smooth or as detailed. Also released for the Game Boy and NES.

No Escape

Publisher: Psygnosis. Developer: Bits Corporation. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the forgettable 1994 movie, *No Escape* puts gamers in the role of Captain J.T. Robbins, who was played by Ray Liotta in the film. The objective is to escape Absolom Island, which is a sprawling, usually lethal, penitentiary. The action is of the scrolling, side-view, non-linear variety, with Robbins jumping on ledges and punching and kicking such bad guys as Mole Men, Motorheads, Tree Dwellers, and Techno Warriors while avoiding such obstacles as steam, blow darts, electric traps, and spiked pits. A mapping system is available, but it's often hard to know where to go or what to do next. There are more than 150 weapons and other objects to be found and made (butane gas, bulbs, bolts, an iron crowbar, a rusty compass, and the like), but this only adds to the tedium and frustration. Rotoscoped animation is used, but the game looks and plays very poorly. Also released for the SNES.

Nobunaga's Ambition

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1–8 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Set in Feudal Japan (circa 1467–1600), *Nobunaga's Ambition* requires players (as upgradeable daimyos) to unify up to 50 fiefs into one sovereign nation. This involves cultivating land, winning the approval of the people (by paying them gold from farming rice crops), hiring soldiers, deploying troops, bribing enemies, attacking other fiefs, and much more. There are numerous menus to navigate for entering commands, and the chess-like gameplay has players maneuvering five army units across a grid-like playfield. The Super NES version of the game is preferable since it offers mouse control. Also released for the GB and NES. Sequels to the game include *Nobunaga's Ambition II* (NES), *Nobunaga's Ambition: Lord of Darkness* (SNES), *Nobunaga's Ambition: Rise to Power* (PS2), and *Nobunaga's Ambition: Iron Triangle* (PS2).

Normy's Beach Babe-O-Rama

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: High

Score Productions/Realtime Associates. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Based on Keith Robinson's *Making It* comic strip, *Normy's Beach Babe-O-Rama* is plenty silly, but comes up lacking in terms of gameplay. Armed with a spear, cream pies, bananas, rocks, and a mallet (a pitiful weapon containing a boxing glove, chicken, or beaver), beach dude Normy runs, dashes, and jumps through six worlds filled with cavemen, dinosaurs, castles, knights, ancient temples, aliens, and/or other creatures and constructs throughout time and space. In addition to middling cartoon comedy and graphics, the game is characterized by poor controls and cheap deaths. Stick with *Earthworm Jim*.

Olympic Gold: Barcelona '92

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex Design Studios. Sports/Olympics, 1–4 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1992.

An "Official Licensed Product of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Summer Games," *Olympic Gold* lets players select from eight international teams (accompanied by their respective national anthems) to participate in seven events: 100m Sprint, the Hammer Throw, Archery, 110m Hurdles, Pole Vaulting, Springboard Diving, and 200m Freestyle Swimming. Training is available, as is a Mini mode that lets players bypass some events. Most of the games require furious button-mashing (à la *Track & Field*), but certain games make use of timed button presses and slow, steady button presses. Three difficulty levels are available: club, national, and Olympic. Also released for the Game Gear.

Olympic Summer Games: Atlanta 1996

Publisher: Black Pearl Software. Developer: Tiertex Design Studios. Sports/Olympics, 1–8 players (alternating, 4-player simultaneous). 1996.

Olympic Summer Games features 10 events: 100m Sprint, 110m Hurdles, Pole Vault, Triple Jump, Long Jump, High Jump, Javelin, Discus, Clay Pigeon Shooting, and Archery (which takes wind into account). There are three difficulty levels and two modes of play (Competition and Practice), and gamers can select

from 32 different countries to challenge actual Olympic records. As in *Track & Field*, certain events require players to furiously press buttons to get the onscreen characters to perform. The timing of button presses is also important in various events. Based on the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games, which were held in Atlanta. Also released for the GB, SNES, PSX, and 3DO.

Onslaught

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Nextgrand/Code Monkeys. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Onslaught is a hack-'n'-slash platformer in which players guide a brawny, long-haired, loin cloth-wearing warrior through the battle-scarred dominion of Gargore, climbing, jumping, and using a sword to fend off enemy troops comprised of footmen, spearmen, wizards, amazons, knights, cavalry, skeletons, boar riders, and others. Special weapons, such as maces, crossbows, bombs, and magic demons (which destroy all nearby enemies), appear as shields and can only be used a certain number of times. In addition, scrolls enact spells to freeze enemies, increase energy, and more. Levels are selected from a campaign map, with talismans helping players pass mountains, forests, swamps, and water (which otherwise block your way on the campaign map). The action moves slowly, but there is nice graphical detail. Based on the 1989 computer game. Somewhat similar to: *Rastan Saga II*.

The Ooze

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Overhead View Action, 1 player. 1995.

A creative, fun, highly unusual game, *The Ooze* has players guiding a green, amorphous blob around a toxic dump, a waste plant, a genetics lab, a power core, and a plague factory, gathering up remnants of DNA helixes (in order to restore the blob to human form) while avoiding drains and other obstacles. The oozing hero, in a battle against The Corporation (an outfit poised to unleash a plague on the world), can punch and spit on the mutated creatures that get in his way, and he can flip levers to open doors and turn off deadly

machines. Punches can be guided snake-like around corners, and power-ups provide speed boosts, extra lives, industrial strength, and increased mass, the latter of which can also be achieved via rabbit-catching bonus rounds. The graphics rarely impress, but the driving, techno-pop musical score fits the theme like an industrial strength glove.

Operation Europe: Path to Victory

1939–45

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Command the Allied or Axis forces in *Operation Europe* for the Genesis. Hitler's war machine is rampaging across Europe, and players can help or hinder his dubious conquest through six historical World War II campaigns: Occupation of France, North African War, Fierce Battle of Kursk, Storming of Normandy, Battle of the Bulge, and Fight for Berlin. Gameplay consists of ordering supplies, calling on reinforcements, raiding enemy cities, relieving inefficient commanders, sabotaging supply lines, assassinating enemy commanders, dropping paratroopers into occupied cities, ordering tanks to open fire, having engineers lay mines, outflanking enemies on the battlefield, keeping supply and repair regiments safe, monitoring soldier fatigue, and much more. Commanders to control include Patton, McAuliffe, and Montgomery for the Allies and Rommel, Rundstedt, and Manstein for the Axis powers. Strategic maneuvering and planning are the orders of the day in this deep, involving, complex war simulation. Also released for the SNES.

Out of this World

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Delphine Software. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1991.

Based on the 1991 computer game, *Out of this World* is bursting at the seams with audio/visual panache, including cel shading, roto-scoped animation, cinematic cut scenes, a scaling camera, polygonal graphics, digitized sound effects, and an epic musical score. Players guide an agile, red-headed scientist named Lester Knight Chaykin as he tries to escape an

alien planet comprised of caverns, barren landscapes, and mountainous backgrounds. This involves walking, running, jumping, ducking, swimming, and shooting and kicking enemies (including huge dark creatures). Solving puzzles plays a major role as well, but the trial-and-error nature of many of the puzzles will frustrate less-than-patient gamers (passwords and infinite continues are welcome features). *Out of this World* is not for everyone, but its sustained sense of suspense, silky smooth animation, and groundbreaking cinematic presentation make it a worthwhile entry in the Genesis library. The original computer game was called *Another World*, but was altered to *Out of this World* for release in America in order to avoid confusion with the popular soap opera. Also released for the SNES and 3DO.

Out Run 2019

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Hertz. Futuristic Racing, 1 player. 1993.

Out Run 2019 for the Genesis is the futuristic console sequel to Sega's *Out Run*, which debuted in the arcades in 1986. Players drive a blue racecar (viewed from behind/a little above) that is super fast, but less personal than the Ferrari from *Out Run* as you can't see the driver or anyone riding shotgun. Players race 25 different routes through five levels of twisting, turning, branching roadways, avoiding obstacles (such as trees and other vehicles) while trying to reach each check point prior to time running out. After a certain period of good, mistake-free racing, the turbo gear automatically kicks in, sending the car careening ahead at almost 700 mph. Swerving tunnels, 360-degree spins, and speed ramps add to the fun. *Out Run 2019* has beautiful background visuals consisting of snow-capped mountains, desert sands, ancient ruins, farm lands, and sci-fi cities. This is an electrifying racing title, but the original *Out Run* was an even better game and had superior music.

Outlander

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Mindscape/Graftgold. Demolition/Combat Racing/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

Outlander looks and plays like a game based on the film *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*, but without the licensing. Players cruise down post-apocalyptic streets, firing bullets and surface-to-air missiles at biker punks, jeeps, helicopters, and other enemies. The first-person driving action is viewed from inside the car (as opposed to the easier SNES version, which provides a third-person perspective). Occasionally, players can exit into a town and hop out of the car for a little side-scrolling combat action. Here players will punch and kick rednecks, crossbowmen, and skinheads while gathering ammo and fuel.

OutRun

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Hertz. Sports Car Racing, 1 player. 1991.

OutRun for the Genesis is a remarkably faithful port of Sega's 1986 arcade classic (voice effects are intact, for example), which came in four different cabinet styles, including a sit-down, car-shaped model with a hydraulic system that would move the cabinet during gameplay. Drivers, viewing the action from behind (and just a little above) a red, two-speed Ferrari Testarossa, race from stage to stage, trying to make it to each checkpoint prior to time running out (close calls are downright thrilling). Each course, including the Autobahn, branches out into selectable pathways filled with curves, hills, and such gorgeous scenery as deserts, forests, ruins, and seaside roadways. Adding to the fun are three memorable and distinctive songs: Passing Breeze, Splash Wave, and Magical Sound Shower. When players run into an oncoming jeep, car, or truck, or otherwise crash, the Ferrari will flip over, and the driver and the passenger (a hot blonde) will tumble out of the car, meaning it's actually fun to have a wreck. *OutRun* is fast, arcade-style excitement and a must-own for Sega fans. Also released for the Game Gear and Master System, both of which separate the compound word title into *Out Run*.

OutRunners

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Sega. Sports Car Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A port of Sega's 1993 arcade game, *OutRunners* is the second sequel to the great *OutRun*, which wowed gamers with its gorgeous graphics, inviting music, and branching raceways. *OutRunners* is somewhat similar to *OutRun* (behind-the-car perspective, distinctive background scenery) and adds some new features, including eight selectable cars, each with its own attributes, including power, maneuverability, and transmission type. There's even a two-player split screen mode. Unfortunately, the one-player mode is split-screen as well, and it's simply not as enjoyable as the full-screen action of *OutRun*. The split-screen takes away from the visual appeal as well. The game boasts 36 courses, including roads twisting and turning through Egypt, Hawaii, Russia, and San Francisco. There's even underwater racing, which is clearly a departure from the original *OutRun*. Followed by: *OutRun 2* (arcade, Xbox), *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* (PS2, PSP, Xbox), and other sequels.

Pac-Attack

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Namco. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Pac-Attack is similar to *Tetris*, but with the fun and whimsical (if improbable) inclusion of Pac-Man and Pac-Man ghosts. As blocks of various shapes fall from the top of the screen (one at a time), players maneuver said blocks into position below, the goal being to create solid horizontal lines in order to make the blocks disappear. Ghosts get in the way, but they can be eaten by the infrequently appearing Pac-Man. Eating ghosts gradually fills a fairy meter that, when full, causes a fairy to destroy rows of blocks. In Normal mode, the game ends when the blocks/ghosts have reached the top of the screen. In Puzzle mode, the goal is to clear the screen of ghosts with a limited number of Pac-Mans. In split-screen Versus mode, players must outlast their opponent. Eating more than five ghosts drops a few ghosts on the opponent's playfield. A great and oftentimes underrated cart, *Pac-Attack* is adapted from the 1992 Namco arcade game, *Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle*, which featured oddball creatures instead of Pac-Man characters. Also released for

the SNES (with the option to select mono or stereo sound), Game Boy, and Game Gear.

Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Namco. Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1994.

Reminiscent of the NES game *Gumshoe*, *Pac-Man 2* doesn't put players in direct control of the title character. Rather, more subtle methods of guiding the hero are used, specifically "Namco's innovative Character Guidance Interface." By maneuvering a pointer around the screen, players aim a sling shot. Firing said sling shot at onscreen items affects the environment and lets Pac-Man progress. Examples include: Pac-Man running away from a crow, riding a glider over a canyon, jumping up to climb a rope, riding a mine cart, milking a cow to get milk for Pac-Baby, and more. Making Pac-Man switch directions and look at certain things play key roles in the puzzle-based levels. Helpful items include power pellets, ID cards (for opening doors to the factory), a rope-way pass (garnered from Ms. Pac-Man) for reaching the mountain top, and a train pass for going to the city. Some will find the going tedious while others will revel in the cute, cartoonish, puzzle-based action. Entering PCMNORG as the password lets gamers play *Pac-Man* (the arcade classic) while PCJRDPW unlocks *Pac-Jr.* (an original game not to be confused with *Jr. Pac-Man*). Also released for the SNES.

Pac-Mania

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Sculptured Software. Maze, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

An excellent port of Namco's thoroughly entertaining (if underrated) arcade game (1987), *Pac-Mania* has the same basic premise as *Pac-Man* (guide the pie-shaped icon around mazes, gobble dots while avoiding ghosts), but with some interesting differences, including: pseudo-3D graphics; themed mazes (Block Town, Pac-Man's Park, Sandbox Land, and Jungly Steps); scrolling playfields; a pair of new ghosts named Spunky and Funky; an isometric perspective; and, most importantly, the ability

for Pac-Man to jump over ghosts. In addition, there are two new power pills: green, which provides a temporary speed boost, and red, which provides double points. As with the NES version, the clapping and cheering sounds from the coin-op classic are missing. However, there are some console-specific features, including four difficulty levels, selectable mazes, and the ability to turn a special Pac-Booster on or off. Also seen in the Genesis version of *Ms. Pac-Man*, the Pac-Booster makes Pac-Man super fast.

The Pagemaster

Publisher: Fox Interactive. Developer: Probe Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the 1994 film starring Macaulay Culkin and Christopher Lloyd, *The Pagemaster* finds Richard Tyler in a wondrous library filled with flying books and fictional horror, fantasy, and adventure characters come to life. To make it back to the outside world of reality, Richard must run, jump, and battle his way through 68 levels of pirates, ghosts, grim reapers, skeletons, and other baddies (including such literary figures as Long John Silver and Humpty Dumpty). Richard can jump on the enemies, but he can also use such weapons as a sword, gooey eyeballs, and magic dust. Other helpful items include sticky hands (enhanced climbing), helmets (temporary invincibility), and magic shoes (higher jumps). A bonus round at the end of each level has Richard taking a flying book ride. Other actions include climbing ropes and ladders, dodging the crushing fist of the Frankenstein monster, riding moving platforms, and more. Jumping is a little wonky (including blind jumps), but this is a fun, nice looking game, especially for younger players enamored with the movie. Similar to: Disney's *Aladdin*. Also released for the SNES and Game Boy.

Paperboy

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Motivetime Limited. Mission-Based Racing, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

Based on the wildly popular 1984 Atari arcade game, which stood out thanks to amus-

ing voice effects, unusual gameplay, and a handlebars controller, *Paperboy* has players riding a bicycle up a narrow pathway consisting primarily of a sidewalk and the left side of the road, throwing newspapers at houses lining the left side of the screen. Hitting the windows of non-subscribers nets points, as does hitting the porches and paperboxes of subscribers. There are other targets as well, such as bushes, tombstones, and garbage cans, but such obstacles as motorcycles, tornados, breakdancers, dogs, and cars make things difficult. Aiming is tough, due in part to the game's isometric perspective, and papers are limited in supply, so it is necessary to pick up extra bundles along the way. Levels are referred to as days of the week, and making it to the end of a street results in a special bonus training course. Like the one-player Master System version, this fine port offers three difficult levels. Also released for the GB, GBC, GG, NES, and Lynx. Remade in 3D for the Nintendo 64.

Paperboy 2

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Mission-Based Racing, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

The console sequel to the arcade classic *Paperboy* (Atari, 1984), *Paperboy 2* features similar gameplay, but adds the following fresh features: new obstacles (including gargoyles, ghosts, and sewer monsters); new types of houses (including mansions, haunted houses, and kids' clubhouses); the choice to play as a female cyclist; and, most importantly, obstacles and houses on both sides of the road. As in *Paperboy*, levels are set up like days of the week, with each level ending in a bonus round. If the player misses hitting the porch or the paperbox of a subscriber's house, that house becomes a non-subscriber. If the player hits every

subscriber house in a level, a former subscriber will re-subscribe. Hitting non-subscribers' windows, runaway baby carriages, burglars, and other such targets nets extra points. Also released for the GB, GG, NES, and SNES.

Pat Riley Basketball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Sanctioned by the former Los Angeles Lakers/New York Knicks/Miami Heat coach, *Pat Riley Basketball* was the first hoops simulation for the Genesis, and it shows. The players run slowly, the game lacks such amenities as substitutions, real players, and real teams (there are only eight squads total), and the basketball



Paperboy 2 is the home sequel to the arcade classic *Paperboy* (1984), adding a variety of new features, including a female cyclist and obstacles and houses on both sides of the road.

is freaking huge (in terms of scale, it might as well be a beach ball). The elevated view of the action is from the side, with cheerleaders and fans shown in the background, but no coaches or bench players (explaining, perhaps, the lack of substitutions). Modes of play include Exhibition and Tournament, and there are two game speeds, two defense schemes (man to man and zone), three game lengths (20-minute, 48-minute, and 80-minute), and several types of infractions (including traveling, over-and-back, and five-, 10-, and 24-second violations). Ubiquitous-to-a-fault steals and slam dunks characterize a typical round of play. The game does make good use of meters, which are utilized for free throws and dunks (including for the player trying to block the dunk). Similar to: *Takin' It to the Hoop* (TG-16).

Pebble Beach Golf Links

Publisher: Sega. Developer: T&E Soft. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1994.

Pebble Beach Golf Links features an effective, behind-the-golfer perspective, supplemented by a number of small windows showing data, wind direction, player stance, swing meter, club selection (a caddy lends advice if desired), and more. Gamers are given plenty of latitude in determining how hard and in what direction to hit the ball, and battery backup saves such things as stats, scores, putts per round, longest drives, and created players (up to 10 golfers in all). There are 18 holes of golf, each decorated with such obstacles as bunkers, sand traps, water hazards, and trees. Other features include multiple camera angles, green grids (for aiming putts), instant replays, and overhead flyby views of the holes. Modes of play include Practice, Skins Game, Stroke Play, Match Play, and Tournament Play vs. 48 Top Golfers. Also released for the Saturn and 3DO. California's fabulous Pebble Beach has been featured in numerous other video games, including *Bandai Golf: Challenge Pebble Beach* for the NES.

Pelé!

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Radical Entertainment. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Endorsed by the man widely regarded as the greatest soccer player of all time, *Pelé!* lets solo gamers hone their skills in Practice mode or enter an 18-game Season. The cart offers a decidedly different take on two-player Tournament action as gamers must alternate playing one-player matches until their two teams are matched up head-to-head. There are 40 international teams from which to choose, and players can be customized in terms of speed, shot, control, energy, and aggressiveness. Other features include: penalty kicks, instant replay, throw-ins, corner kicks, offsides, formation changes, substitutions, free kicks, bicycle kicks, headers, traps, and dives. The action is viewed from an isometric perspective. Pelé was one of the first celebrities to endorse a video game, lending his name to *Pelé's Soccer* for the Atari 2600 in 1981.

Pelé II: World Tournament Soccer

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Radical Entertainment. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

This sequel to *Pelé!* features the same isometric perspective, but adds a four-player mode. The game was released in conjunction with the 1994 World Cup (which was played in the U.S.) and includes all 24 national teams from that event (meaning such teams as France and England are excluded). U.S. Gold held the official FIFA rights to the World Cup with *World Cup USA 94*, so each of the teams in this game is comprised of fictional players. Lasting up to 45 minutes, matches are adjustable in five-minute increments, and players can turn penalty shoot-outs off or on. Pelé himself is on hand to offer advice. Other features include: penalty kicks, instant replay, throw-ins, corner kicks, offsides, formation changes, substitutions, free kicks, bicycle kicks, headers, traps, and dives. While certainly respectable representations of their genre, neither *Pelé!* nor *Pelé II: World Tournament Soccer* can compete with the *FIFA* soccer series.

Pete Sampras Tennis

Publisher: Sportsmaster. Developer: Codemasters. Sports/Tennis, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Easily one of the best tennis games of the era, *Pete Sampras Tennis* offers an embarrassment of riches: 32 different computer opponents; 18 world tour locations; three court types (grass, hard, and clay); digitized voice effects; more than 4,000 frames of player animation; excellent controls (including lob, volley, smash, drop, and power hits); sharp graphics; and instant replays. The most innovative element is the use of “J-Cart” technology, which enables doubles action by letting players plug a pair of extra controllers into the top of the cartridge.

PGA European Tour

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Polygames. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1994.

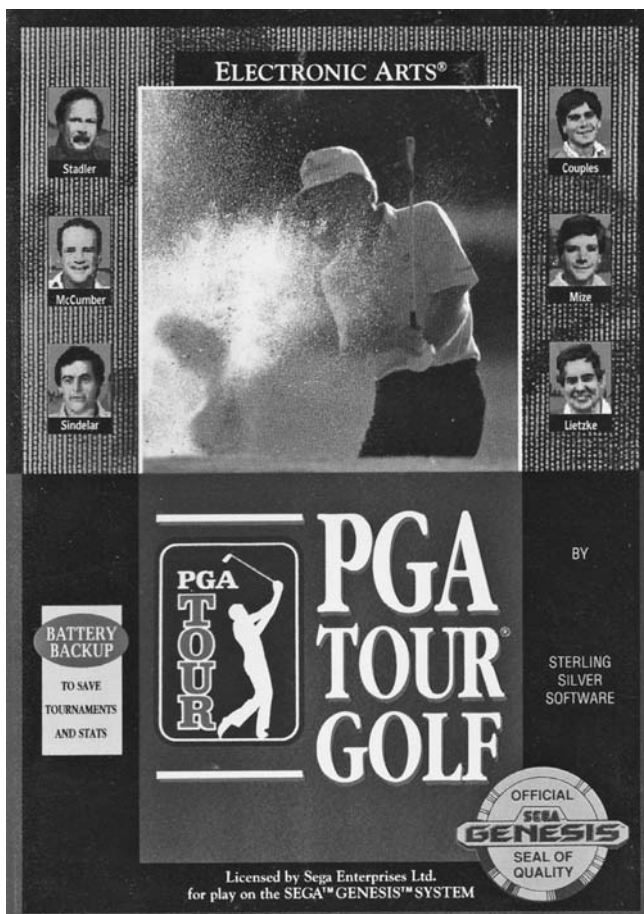
PGA European Tour plays a lot like its progenitors—*PGA Tour Golf* and *PGA Tour Golf II*—but with five European courses and 60 European pros, including such stars as Seve Ballesteros, Bernard Langer, and Sandy Lyle. Courses include: Crans-sur-Sierre in Switzerland, Forest of Arden in England, Le Golf National in France, Valderrama in Spain, and Wentworth Club in England. Other new components include: Matchplay, Canon Shoot-Out series with sudden death, changing weather conditions, and revamped graphics and sounds. Also released for the GB, SNES, PSX, and N64.

PGA Tour Golf

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Sterling Silver Software. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1991.

Based on the 1990 computer game, this is the first in a long line of golf titles from sports experts Electronic Arts. *PGA Tour Golf* pioneered the innovative, oft-copied, three-click swing meter

used for starting the swing, setting the power, and setting the draw or fade. The game features 60 PGA pros, including such stars as Fred Couples, Fuzzy Zoeller, and Craig Stadler, and there are four courses to play on: PGA West, TPC at Avenal, TPC at Sawgrass, and Sterling Shores (a fantasy course). Modes of play are as follows: Practice Round, Tournament, Driving Range, and Putting Green. Other features include: divots, wind, advice from the pros, flyby views of each hole, hazards (bunkers, water, sand, and trees), instant replay, club selection, digitized sound effects, a grid-based putting system that shows the slope of the green, and battery backup for saving stats and tournament progress. The view is from behind the golfer. After the ball has been hit, the view switches



PGA Tour Golf is the first game in the popular and influential Electronic Arts golf series.

temporarily to in front of the ball. Highly recommended. The SNES version features Mode 7 scaling and rotation. Also released for the Game Gear.

PGA Tour Golf II

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Polygames. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1992.

PGA Tour Golf II plays a lot like the original game, but has new sound effects, more detailed graphics (including digitized golfers), an improved automatic caddy, and a draw and fader meter for superior ball physics. There are now seven courses (six Tournament Players Club and one fantasy), five PGA tournaments, and a Skins Challenge. Also released for the Game Gear.

PGA Tour Golf III

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Polygames/High Score Productions. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1994.

PGA Tour Golf III was released after *PGA European Tour*, making it the fourth game in EA's *PGA Tour* series. Gameplay is virtually identical to the earlier titles (if it ain't broke, don't fix it), but there are some minor modifications, including more colors, new digitized pro golfer animations, the ability to save replays (via battery backup), and a new ball cursor interface for draw, fade, ball arc, and the like. The game boasts eight Tournament Players Club courses: Summerlin, Sawgrass, Avenel, Scottsdale, Southwind, River Highlands, Las Colinas, and Woodlands.

PGA Tour 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: NuFX/Hitmen Productions. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1995.

PGA Tour 96 is the follow-up to *PGA Tour Golf III* (which followed *PGA European Tour*), making it the fifth (and final) game in the Electronic Arts golf series for the Genesis. The game strays significantly from the earlier titles, especially in terms of graphics. Courses and golfers are now rendered in 3D, but this has the unfortunate effect of making players

wait several seconds between shots for the visuals to fully load. There are three 18-hole courses: Spyglass Hill, TPC at Sawgrass, and TPC at River Highlands. The 56-player PGA roster includes 10 tournament stars: Brad Faxon, Fuzzy Zoeller, Craig Stadler, Jeff Sluman, Mark O'Meara, Davis Love III, Bruce Lietzke, Tom Kite, Lee Janzen, and Peter Jacobsen. The traditional horizontal swing meter has been replaced by a curved meter positioned directly behind the golfer. *PGA Tour 96* was also released for the SNES, but it lacks 3D rendering and is patterned more after *PGA Tour Golf III*. Followed by: *PGA Tour 97* (PSX, Saturn), *PGA Tour 98* (PSX), and the *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* series (various).

Phantasy Star II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1989.

The "6 Mega Memory" follow-up to *Phantasy Star* for the Master System, *Phantasy Star II* once again takes place in the Algo Star System, specifically on the lush planet of Palm, the frozen Dezo, and the desert-ridden Mota. Mother Brain, a climate-controlling computer system, has blown her circuits, unleashing hordes of Bio-Monsters. The player, as a government agent named Rolf, must band together a group of heroes (including a thief, a doctor, and a hunter), explore a variety of areas (including dungeons, labs, and cities), gather clues, converse with townsfolk, and purchase such items as armor, scalpels, daggers, guns, knives, swords, boomerangs, antidotes, and lasers. The action is viewed from overhead, but switches to behind the party members (with grid-based backgrounds) when it's time to engage in turn-based battles. Defeating enemies levels up the player's character. The first true RPG for the Genesis and one of the most acclaimed 16-bit titles for any system, *Phantasy Star II*, which was originally packaged with a poster map and a 110-page strategy guide, is a difficult sci-fi/fantasy epic with a sweeping musical score. A must-own for any hardcore RPG fan.

Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

Noteworthy for its branching storyline, *Phantasy Star III* puts players in the role of Prince Rhys, whose bride-to-be, Maia, was kidnapped by a dragon. At points during the epic, seven-world quest to retrieve her, play control switches to Rhys' son, and then to his grandson, giving the game its generational subtitle and making it innovative for its time. Further, players get to choose who to marry, changing the game and adding to its originality. Gameplay, which is slowly paced (some might say tedious), consists of exploring towns (including caves, dungeons, and castles), purchasing various items (including knives, swords, shields, boots, vests, and lasers), gaining experience points, and engaging in random turn-based battles (the animations of which are downgraded from *Phantasy Star II*). The storyline, setting, and characters in *Phantasy Star III* differ from the two previous installments (and from *Phantasy Star IV*), alienating many of the series' most ardent fans.

Phantasy Star IV: The End of the Millennium

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1993.

Originally retailing for \$79.99, *Phantasy Star IV* takes the series back to its sci-fi roots (*Phantasy Star III* was indeed pure fantasy). A 24-meg tour de force of RPG greatness, the game casts players in the role of Chaz the Hunter, who must explore space stations, journey through towns, and battle hordes of Bio-Monsters, saving the galaxy in the process. There are several other characters—including a warrior, a magician, a pair of cyborgs, and a priest—to control as well (up to four at once in a party). Turn-based battles, which are viewed from behind, let players gain experience. Detailed backgrounds replace the grids of earlier titles. There are more than 200 different types of magic to wield (magic can be combined to perform more powerful attacks), along with four vehicles to commandeer: a land rover, an ice digger, a hydrofoil, and a landale spacecraft. Items to purchase include daggers, boom-rangs, shields, helmets, swords, and many more. Anime stills to help carry the story along

and an epic, beautifully orchestrated soundtrack are icing on the cake. Followed by: *Phantasy Star Online* (DC), *Phantasy Star Universe* (PS2), *Phantasy Star Portable* (PSP), and various other sequels.

Phantom 2040

Publisher: Viacom New Media. Developer: Illusions. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

Boasting excellent graphics and sounds, a cool storyline, deep gameplay, strategic boss battles, 14 weapons, 20 different game endings, and more than 60 levels of play, *Phantom 2040* is easily one of the better video games based on a cartoon. Players guide the running, jumping, purple-clad icon as he endeavors to stop Rebecca Madison and her army of biots. A versatile hero, the so-called “Ghost Who Walks” can ride elevators, set bombs to destroy terrorists, blast through floors and walls, shoot bad guys with a smart gun, climb and swing using an inductance rope, trash biots with homing missiles, and much more. Two weapons can be carried at once, an inventory system lets players keep all the collected items and weapons, and a map screen lets players select areas of Metropia (jungle, warehouses, lairs, and the like) to explore. *Phantom 2040* is based on the 1994 animated series of the same name, which posits a futuristic version of Lee Falk's the Phantom, a comic strip hero who first appeared in 1936. Also released for the SNES.

Phelios

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Namco. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Although it butchers Greek mythology (an unusual setting for a shooter), *Phelios* does so to nice effect. Sun god Apollo, perched atop the winged horse Pegasus, flies through seven monster-infested worlds (including Death Dungeon, Icebound Soul, and Watchdog in Hell), firing blasts of energy with his sword of light. The power of each blast is determined by how long players charge the sword before letting go of the fire button. Shooting golden owls emits power-ups: beam, homing, across

(ricochet shots), speed up, or an extra life. Namco's original arcade version from 1988 has sharper graphics and a two-player alternating mode.

Pink Goes to Hollywood

Publisher: TecMagik. Developer: HeadGames. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

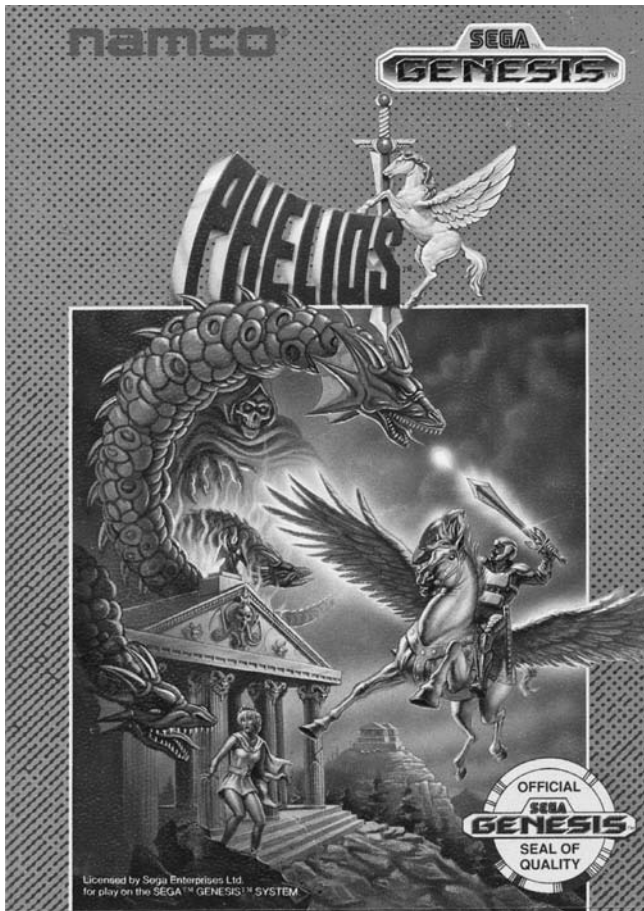
During his first Hollywood audition, longtime TV star Pink Panther spoils a scene starring Inspector Clouseau, prompting Pink's disgruntled nemesis to chase him through 13 different movie sites, including Pinkenstein, Pink Beard, Polterpink, Jungle Pink, and Cat on a Hot Pink Roof. While walking, running, jumping, climbing, and swimming for his life, Pink must dodge or destroy rats, cats, dino-

sours, cowboy boots, sharks, and other enemies and obstacles. Fortunately, there are a number of weapons Pink can wield, including a fly swatter, a detonator, a sledgehammer, bug spray, and a dog. As a cartoon platformer, *Pink Goes to Hollywood* is typically mediocre, but the game does distinguish itself somewhat with various tokens Pink can find and use for floating, building a bridge, creating a staircase, and more. In addition, the Pink Panther theme song plays throughout, and Pink is nicely animated, showing off his unique walking style, which can only be described as an ambling gait. Also released for the SNES.

Pinocchio

Publisher: THQ. Developer: Virgin Studios London/Westwood Studios. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

Based on the 1940 feature film, which is one of the two or three best Disney movies of all time, *Pinocchio* is a beautifully drawn, beautifully animated game that takes players through 10 levels, including An Actor's Life for Me, Escape from Pleasure Island, The Search for Monstro, and Escape from Monstro. In most of the levels, players guide the wooden puppet-turned-boy. He will walk through town on his way to school; make his way through the ocean and Monstro; dodge rocks, spikes, thrown firecrackers, and other obstacles; and avoid and use a spin attack against such enemies as bullies, crabs, geese, and gulls. Pinocchio will also ride a raft, a roller coaster, a manta ray, and a turtle. In the Puppet Show level, Pinocchio must mimic the moves of puppets. In the Lampside Setting level, players guide Jiminy Cricket as he swats moths with his umbrella. Despite an uneven level of difficulty, *Pinocchio* is a playable game that fans of the film will appreciate, especially from a visual



Based on Namco's 1988 arcade game, *Phelios* is a vertical scrolling shooter with a Greek mythology theme.

standpoint. Includes decent instrumental versions of “When You Wish Upon a Star” and other songs. Also released for the SNES. The Game Boy version is similar, but has just seven levels.

Pirates! Gold

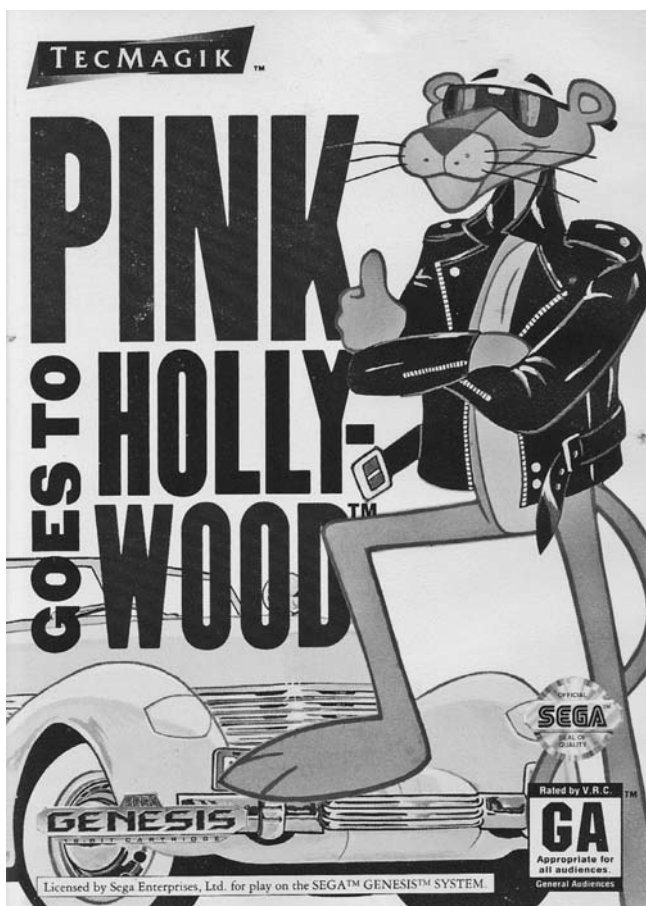
Publisher: MicroProse Software. Developer: MicroProse Software. Action/Adventure/Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1993.

The sequel to the computer game, *Sid Meier's Pirates!* (1987), *Pirates! Gold* puts players in the role of a scurvy pirate (aarr!), pillaging coastal towns, battling other ships (from an overhead perspective), and engaging in swordfights (from a side-view perspective). The game takes place on the Caribbean Sea in the 16th and 17th centuries, with players selecting from six different scenarios: The Silver Empire, Merchants and Smugglers, The New Colonists, War for Profit, The Buccaneer Heroes, and The Pirates' Sunset. Other choices include nationality, difficulty level, and special abilities: fencing, navigation, gunnery, medicine, or wit and charm. Released as *Pirates!* for the NES. Followed by: *Sid Meier's Pirates!: Live the Life* (Xbox) and a re-visit of *Sid Meier's Pirates!* (PSP, Wii).

The Pirates of Darkwater

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

The Pirates of Darkwater is based on the Hanna-Barbera animated series, which ran from 1991 to 1993. After selecting which character to control (the strong, but slow Ioz, the fast, but weak Thula, or the somewhere-in-between Ren), players run, jump, climb, hack, and slash their way through forests, villages, islands, ships, and caverns, battling pirates, skeletons, and other enemies. There are plenty



Pink Goes to Hollywood lets players control Pink Panther, who starred in *The Pink Panther Show*, which began in 1969 on NBC.

of rocks and other obstacles to avoid, and grabbing 10 watermelons summons Niddler, a friendly monkeybird that lets players switch characters during levels (resulting in replenished health). In addition, there are health items, invincibility potions, and other helpful objects to collect. Frequently, players can simply run and jump past the enemies instead of confronting them, but it is sometimes necessary to collect a set number of coins in order to progress. Long text sequences tell the story, which will appeal to fans of the show, but bore most everyone else. Bottom line: *The Pirates of Darkwater* is a mediocre platformer with some nice visuals. Much different than the SNES version, which offers *Final Fight*-style side-scrolling combat.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

Publisher: Activision. Developer: Activision.
Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

A beautifully animated, nicely scored, graphically detailed reimagining of the 1982 Atari 2600 classic (*Pitfall!*, of course), *The Mayan Adventure* casts players in the role of Harry Junior, exploring jungles, ruins, and temples, trying to find his father (Pitfall Harry, of course). As in the original, players run, jump, climb, search for treasure, and swing on vines, but this game adds crawling, bungee jumping, entering doors, crossing pegs and cords, riding ziplines, springing off webs, pulling levers, battling bosses (mostly jaguars), riding a mine and a skate car, and using weapons: a whip-sling, stones, exploding stones, and a boomerang. The action has an overall linear feel to it, but there are puzzles, bonus mini-games, and hidden areas. The elaborate animation causes a slight delay in the controls, and the blind jumps and small, swarming, regenerating enemies (such as dragonflies, monkeys, and spiders) can be a pain (Harry Jr. can't throw straight up or down). However, this is nevertheless a fine adventure — it's certainly superior to the horrible NES game, *Super Pitfall*. The original *Pitfall!* is unlockable. Also released for the GBA, SNES (with better music), Jaguar (with a welcome save feature), the Sega CD (with CD quality sound, better graphics, and extra stages), and 32X (with better graphics and extra stages). Followed by: *Pitfall: Beyond the Jungle* (GBC), *Pitfall 3D: Beyond the Jungle* (PSX), *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition* (GBA, GC, PS2, Xbox), and *Pitfall: The Big Adventure* (Wii).

Pit-Fighter

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Sterling Silver Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Although pitiful in appearance and execution next to a game like *Mortal Kombat* (which also has digitized graphics and voices), *Pit-Fighter* does offer an unusual two-player simultaneous mode enabling gamers to team up against pairs of computer-controlled fighters. (Atari's 1990 arcade version, which was the

first fighting game with digitized graphics, had three-player action and much larger characters). A trio of playable combatants is available: Buzz, a former pro wrestler; Ty, a kick-boxer; and Kato, a black belt in karate. The fighters can grab knives, sticks, and other weapons, and spectators will sometimes interfere. Despite its mediocrity, *Pit-Fighter* for the Genesis crushes its SNES counterpart, which suffers from sluggish controls, frustratingly hard gameplay, and a distinct lack of weaponry.

Pocahontas

Publisher: Disney Interactive. Developer: Funcom. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1996.

Based on Disney's 1995 feature film, *Pocahontas* puts players in the titular role of a Native American woman who must solve simple puzzles — such as finding an alternate entrance to a house and rolling a boulder away from a cave entrance — to help nine animal friends. For each animal rescued, Pocahontas will gain its spirit power, such as night vision, swimming, or sprinting. At any time, players can switch control to Meeko, who can climb trees, fit through narrow spaces, and use Pocahontas as a springboard to reach high areas. The kid-friendly action (Pocahontas can't die) is divided into three acts, which take place in a variety of areas, including rivers, mountains, the Settler's Fort, the Enchanted Glade, the Indian Village, and the long house of Chief Powhatan. Along the way, John Smith (who Pocahontas must rescue), Flit, Kocoum, and other characters from the film appear. In addition, the game includes renditions of such familiar tunes as "Colors of the Wind" and "Just Around the Riverbend." Also released for the Game Boy.

Populous

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Bullfrog Productions. World-Building Simulator, 1 player. 1990.

A port of Bullfrog's legendary "god game" (1989), *Populous* puts players in the role of an Old Testament-like deity who can raise and lower terrain and command a group of followers to build castles, go into battle, farm the

lands, and more. Dubbing a follower a knight equips that character with a sword and shield and the ability to lay waste to enemy homes and crops. To manage unbelievers, players can unleash volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, fires, and other natural disasters. Like its computer counterpart, the Genesis game consists of 500 worlds and is viewed from an isometric perspective. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *Populous: The Beginning* (PSX) and *Populous DS* (DS).

Power Monger

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Sprytes. Strategy/World-Building Simulator, 1 player. 1992.

With the exceptions of an absentee two-player mode (a sorely missed option) and the lack of keyboard control, *Power Monger* for the Genesis is a nice port of the complex computer game, which was developed by Bullfrog (the makers of *Populous*) in 1990. Players control a conquering ruler who gathers and manages food, soldiers, and weapons for use in taking control of up to 195 territories. The real-time action involves pointing and clicking on 20 different icons (attack, spy, trade, etc.) on various windows that display informative text, an isometric view of the land and its assets, an overview of the surrounding territory, and more. Players can be ruthless or compassionate, the latter of which allows for the forming of alliances. The Sega CD version has new animations, including “a 3D fly-by of each world.”

Powerball

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Namco. Sports/Futuristic, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A precursor of sorts to *Mario Strikers Charged* (Wii, 2007), *Powerball* is a futuristic melding of soccer, rugby, and American football. Players select from eight different 10-man teams: Japan, Korea, Brazil, Greece, U.S.S.R., U.S.A., U.K., and China. The view of the scrolling, horizontal field is overhead as players try to kick a ball past the goalie and into the opponent’s goal (worth one point) or run it in to the opposing team’s end zone for a touchdown

(worth three points). Modes of play include Exhibition and League, the latter of which lets players use bonus points to distribute among the team in order to improve their stats. The game has few rules, meaning players are given free reign to kick, tackle, trip, and punch in their quest to score points (luckily, the players wear armor). The field is huge, but an inset map showing all the players in a single window helps in keeping track of the action. *Powerball* hasn’t aged terribly well, but it’s certainly playable, especially in two-player mode.

Predator 2

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Teeny Weeny Games. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Based on the 1990 feature film, *Predator 2* puts players in the Danny Glover role of Lt. Mike Harrigan of the LAPD. Armed with a rapid-fire standard issue gun and the ability to equip a rifle, a scatter gun, a sawed-off shotgun, and grenades, Harrigan must walk around city streets, rooftops, and subways (all of which are viewed from a faux isometric perspective), blowing away hordes of gang members, confiscating illicit drugs, rescuing innocent hostages, and avoiding being targeted by an invisible Predator’s red, three-dot laser. The more powerful weaponry should be used to destroy helicopters, cars, and semi trucks. The best way to defeat a Predator is to grab his weapons (spear, flying disc, net) and use them against him. This is a tough, unrelenting game, so special care should be taken to grab flak jackets and first aid kits whenever they appear. Also released for the Game Gear. Somewhat similar to: *Smash T.V.* and *Total Carnage*.

Primal Rage

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Probe Entertainment. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Primal Rage takes the one-on-one, non-scrolling fighting formula popularized by *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat* and replaces the humans and other combatants with dinosaurs and ape-like beasts. Each creature can perform upper and lower attacks and quick and fierce

attacks, with a variety of moves being monster-specific, such as Armadon's snout gouge and tail whip. Each creature also has three special moves, such as Sauron's primal scream, earthquake stomp, and cranium crusher. Multiple-hit combos for greater damage infliction factor in as well. The 1994 Atari arcade original has more blood (pools of it, in fact), more animations (including post-victory celebrations), and more sound effects (the background characters cheer), but overall this is a nice looking, nice playing port. While not the most strategic of fighters, *Primal Rage* is an entertaining button-masher. Six-button controller recommended. Also released for the PSX, 32X, SNES, GB, GG, Saturn, 3DO, and Atari Jaguar CD. Followed by: *Primal Rage II* (arcade, 1996).



Predator 2 brings the 1990 movie to the Sega Genesis. Gamers assume the Danny Glover role of Lt. Mike Harrigan.

Prime Time NFL Starring Deion

Sanders

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Spectacular Games. Sports/Football, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

This follow-up to *NFL '95* stars Deion Sanders, former cornerback for the San Francisco 49ers and Dallas Cowboys (among other teams). Full licensing means that all 30 NFL teams are featured (along with all the players), including the expansion Jacksonville Jaguars and Carolina Panthers. Players can select weather conditions, track stats in more than 40 categories, relocate teams to other cities, customize team playbooks, turn injuries on or off, play multiple schedules, create, sign, and release players, and more. The vertical action is viewed from up to 65 yards down the field, and there are three difficulty levels from which to choose. One of many quality sports titles from Sega, *Prime Time NFL Starring Deion Sanders* offers a more challenging single-player experience than *NFL '95*, thanks to smarter computer A.I. Followed by: *NFL 98*.

Prince of Persia

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: The Kremlin. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1993.

A port of the Apple II computer classic (1989), which was designed by Jordan Mechner and published by Broderbund, *Prince of Persia* has players battling bad-dies while trying to escape the castle dungeons of the evil Grand Vizier. To kill a guard, skeleton, or other foe, players must let go of the d-pad so the prince will draw his sword. The prince can block an opponent's strike, and there are potions to drink (for extra time, etc.), but care should be taken as some are poisonous. The castle is riddled with traps

(including spikes and multi-story drops) and puzzles (including pressure plates to open and close doors), and the game must be completed in an hour, making for a tough journey. As in *Pitfall!*, the action doesn't truly scroll. Rather, when the prince goes past the edge of the playfield, the scene instantly changes to the next area. In addition, the controls are purposely lagging, meaning there's a delayed reaction when the prince begins to walk, run, duck, climb, or jump. This can be problematic for those accustomed to more traditional platformers, but patient gamers will be rewarded with an involving quest. Comprised of 12 dangerous levels, *Prince of Persia* features some of the smoothest animation seen in a 16-bit title. Also released for the SNES (with 20 levels and two hours to complete the game), Sega CD (with 100s of film clips), NES, Game Boy Color, and other systems. Followed by: *Prince of Persia 2* (SNES) and other sequels.

Pro Quarterback

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Leland Interactive Media. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Viewed from behind the quarterback (giving players a nice look at down-field receivers), the arcade-style, high-scoring *Pro Quarterback* offers the following: 26 selectable teams (all generic since the game lacks NFL and NFLPA licensing); seven defensive and eight offensive plays; adjustable quarter lengths (2, 5, 10, or 15 minutes); instant replays; six field surfaces (grass, dirt, snow, rain, mud, and artificial turf); and competitive and cooperative play, the latter of which has one player controlling the receiver and one controlling the quarterback. In addition, players can dive, break tackles, and guide receivers toward a passed ball (though not jump for the ball—the computer takes care of that). Unfortunately, the game lacks penalties and a season mode, and there are only nine players (as opposed to 11) on the field for each team. Animation is choppy, but there are a few (make that very few) presentational flourishes, such as scoreboard animations and limited voice effects. Also released for the SNES.

P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A distinct thematic change from the line of medieval strategy games published by Koei, *P.T.O.* reenacts the Pacific campaign of World War II. Commanding either the Allied or Japanese forces, players reenact (and frequently alter the outcome of) nine different air and sea scenarios, including Pearl Harbor, the Okinawa Offensive, and the Battle at Midway. Gameplay, which is facilitated by commands appearing on a menu near the top of the screen, consists of gathering intelligence, assigning fleet commanders, appropriating supplies and fuel, engaging in diplomacy, launching air strikes, and more. Features include historically accurate maps, 10 difficulty levels, 16 different fleets to command, and 250 different World War II ships. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations II* (Saturn, SNES) and *P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations IV* (PS2).

Puggsy

Publisher: Psygnosis. Developer: Traveller's Tales. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

A nicely animated, side-scrolling platformer with puzzle elements thrown in to keep things interesting (and somewhat cerebral), *Puggsy* stars a not-so-cute character who looks like a fat drop of orange chocolate sporting Martian-style antennae. The dumpy dude is stranded on an alien planet, and he must find his spaceship in order to return home. Puggsy performs such typical maneuvers as running and jumping (on enemies and platforms), but he must also pick up and figure out how to use various objects, including balloons, barrels, chests, keys, shells, cups, candles, and knives. Oftentimes Puggsy must carry objects to specific locations, and certain objects can be stacked or thrown. All in all, the game contains 40 interactive objects, more than 100 enemy types, and 57 levels (some of which are secret) spread over 17 strange lands. The Sega CD version features a cartoon introduction, CD quality stereo sound, and end-of-level sequences featuring more level guardians.

The Punisher

Publisher: Capcom. Developer: Sculptured Software. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Although it has smaller, less detailed graphics than its arcade counterpart (Capcom, 1993), *The Punisher* for the Genesis is a decent port overall. Some of the character types are missing (female ninjas, for example), but enemies come in droves, all six levels are present, and the two-player simultaneous mode (with Nick Fury joining in) remains fully intact. Frank "Punisher" Castle frequently goes gun-less, a departure from the original Marvel Comics character, but the punching, kicking, grenade-throwing action works pretty well as a poor man's *Final Fight* or *Streets of Rage*. Much dif-

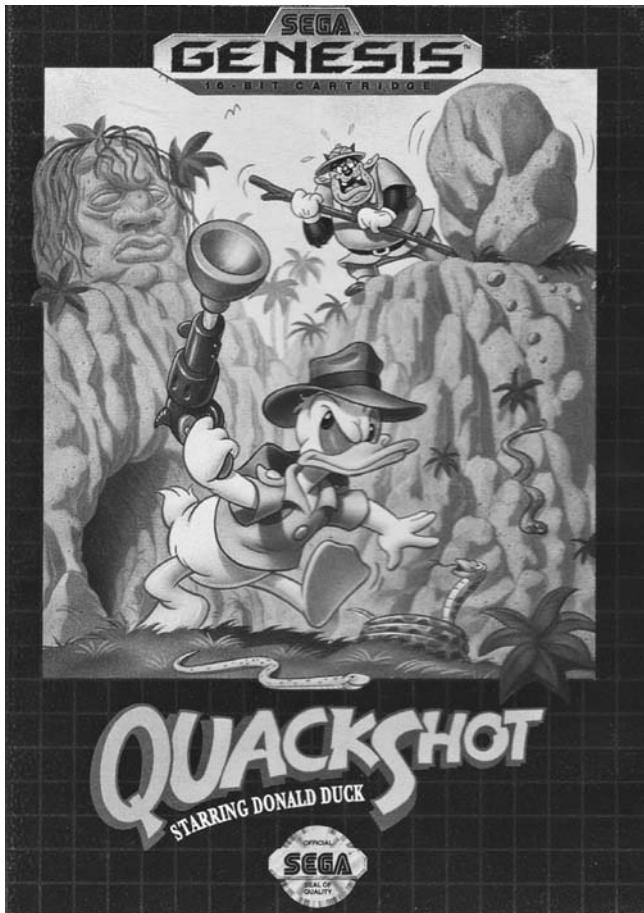
ferent than the first-person shooter games of the same name for the Game Boy and NES.

QuackShot Starring Donald Duck

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

In *QuackShot*, players control Disney's most famous Duck, who can run, jump, dash, and pull off a quack attack (after eating too many chili peppers, Donald will go on a short rampage). Armed with a yellow plunger for temporarily stunning buzzards, Aztec warriors, ghosts, vampire bats, Big Bad Pete, and other enemies, Donald must work his way through 10 very nicely rendered areas, including Duckburg, Mexico, Transylvania, and Egypt. Along the way he should avoid such obstacles as ex-

ploding cacti, floating flames, falling ice floes, and blasting canons. In addition to the yellow plunger, Donald can find plungers that stick on walls (for climbing high obstacles) and attach to airborne animals (for flying across otherwise impassable obstacles). Other usable items include a popcorn shooter and a bubblegum shooter, and Donald will sometimes need to call upon an airplane to take him to a different land. Backtracking is required, but the cute, cartoon-like action is accessible enough to appeal to casual gamers.



QuackShot Starring Donald Duck is a cute platformer featuring 10 levels of cartoon-like action.

Quad Challenge

Publisher: Namco. Developer: Namco. Rally/Off-Road Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A port of Namco's *Four Trax* arcade game (1989), which had two screens and was available in a sit-down model, *Quad Challenge* lets players race one of four different high-powered ATVs (each with different horsepower, handling, and acceleration) on 16 different twisting, turning tracks (in USA Championship circuit

mode). During tight cornering, players should cut hard, shift low, and fan the brakes. When airborne (straight-ways contain rises resulting in jumps), players should throttle down for a softer landing. The action is viewed from behind the player's four-wheeler, and a split-screen option lets a second gamer join in on the fun. Other features include: two difficulty levels, four control options, mountainous back-grounds, and a nine-track Practice mode.

Race Drivin'

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Polygames.
Sports Car Racing, 1 player. 1993.

Based on Atari's 1990 arcade game, which was available in a sit-down cockpit model with a force-feedback steering wheel and a contoured, moveable seat, *Race Drivin'* for the Genesis lets players select one of three different cars: Roadster, Sportster, and Speedster, each varying in terms of speed and handling. Races take place on three different tracks: Super Stunt, Autocross (an oval), and Original (taken from *Hard Drivin'*). In addition, Custom mode offers the console-exclusive ability for players to design their own twisting, turning, looping courses. Objectives include staying on the narrow tracks, driving fast enough to reach check points, and performing such stunts as jump loop and corkscrew loop. The first-person view is from inside the car, and yellow road signs clue players in on what speed they should be driving to perform the upcoming stunt. Unfortunately, a low frame rate, poor controls, and a less-than-convincing sense of motion ruin the experience. *Race Drivin'*, which was also released for the SNES and Game Boy, is the sequel to *Hard Drivin'* (arcade, Genesis, Lynx).

Radical Rex

Publisher: Activision. Developer: Beam Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1994.

Radical Rex, which is an above average platformer, has players guiding a tyrannosaurus through five colorful levels: Jungle Jam, Swamp City, Inner Works, Dino Graveyard, and Skriitch's Forest (plus a bonus world ac-

cessible by gathering 80 dinosaur eggs). After beating the fifth level, players will discover that all five must be repeated. Radical Rex himself is a cute, smiling, mascot-like dinosaur who can walk, jump, swim ("sucking fish" provides extra oxygen), climb, kick (including jump kicks), swing on vines, and ride a skateboard, the latter of which gives Rex Sonic-like speed (otherwise the dinosaur moves relatively slowly). In addition to roaring, breathing fire, and blowing bubbles, Rex can employ a skateboard attack for battling fireball-spewing triceratops, tongue-whipping bullfrogs, poison-shooting scorpions, and other creatures. Fallen enemies can sometimes be used as stepping stones to reach higher areas. Also released for the SNES (with different level design) and Sega CD (with better music).

Raiden Trad

Publisher: Micronet. Developer: Micronet/
Beyond Interactive. Vertical Scrolling Shooter,
1 player. 1991.

An offshoot of the popular *Raiden* franchise, *Raiden Trad* for the Genesis lacks two-player simultaneous action, which is an important trademark of the series. Even so, the game is a blast. Each of the areas players fly over—countryside scenes, a ruined metropolis, the ocean, ancient ruins, an enemy fortress under construction, a floating continent, the enemy's gigantic offensive station, and the enemy's completed main fortress—is filled with challenging, explosive, finely balanced shooting action. The normal, single-bullet shots are fun to shoot and are capable of destroying both airborne and ground-based enemies, but the game really amps up in excitement when the ship powers up with lasers, wide shots, homing missiles, and nuclear missiles (grabbing "P" icons maximizes weapons capabilities). There are also a limited number of bombs that destroy enemies and bullets across a wide area of the screen. The coloring is a bit washed out compared to the various coin-op entries in the series, which began in 1990 with Seibu Kaihatsu's *Raiden*, but the cart has smoother scrolling than its SNES counterpart, along with an added mystery level. Followed by:

Raiden II (arcade), *Raiden Fighters* (arcade), *Raiden III* (PS2), *Raiden IV* (Xbox 360), and other sequels.

Rambo III

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1989.

A system launch title, *Rambo III* is based on the 1988 feature film starring Sylvester Stallone. Players guide the muscle-bound hero through Soviet-occupied Afghanistan on a mission to rescue Colonel Troutman. Rambo is armed with a rapid-fire machine gun and three selectable special weapons: a knife, bow and arrow explosives, and time bombs (similar to grenades) for battling enemy soldiers, tanks, and helicopters, and for blowing up watchtowers and other objects. Each of the six blistering, but short levels has a specific mission. One of the levels, Mission 3: Get to the Arsenal, suffers from slowdown when too much is happening onscreen at once, but overall the game is a blast and has nice production values. The difficulty level amps up in Mission 4: Blow Up all the Enemy's Weapons, which features lots of regenerating enemies and a maze-like compound that is easy to get turned around in. As in such similar games as *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*, the action is viewed from overhead, except during bonus rounds, which are viewed from behind Rambo. Much different than the arcade (third-person 3D shooter) and Master System (light gun shooter) games of the same name.

Rampart

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Silicone Sorcery. Strategy/Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Viewed from overhead and set during the Middle Ages, *Rampart* is a complex, unusual, highly entertaining game. After selecting a territory and choosing a castle to defend, players engage in three primary activities: strategically placing their cannons (the closer a cannon is to the harbor containing enemy ships, the better); guiding a gunsight over enemy gunships, troopers, and flagships while firing cannons

(the more cannons the player has, the faster he or she can shoot); and using rotateable wall segments (some of which look like *Tetris* puzzle pieces) to fill in holes in castle walls and to build new castle walls. In order to continue to the next battle, players must surround at least one castle with walls. Based on Atari's 1990 arcade game, which benefited from trackball control, a three-player mode, and higher resolution graphics. Also released for the GB, GBC, Lynx, NES, and SNES, the latter containing *Super Rampart*, which includes bosses, bonus rounds, more powerful artillery, and more than 15 new scrolling battlefields.

Ranger X

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Gau Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Shooter/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

Largely unheralded at the time of its release, *Ranger X* is an unusual game. The A button shoots right while button C shoots left, meaning the titular mech warrior can fire in the opposite direction it is moving. In addition, the mech is equipped with jump-jets (for hovering) and can utilize a separately controlled cyber cycle for ground attacks. Combining with the cycle transforms the mech into a Super Cyber Cycle capable of changing the flamethrower, plasma blasts, and other special weapons it uses. The robustly executed, beautifully rendered action takes place through eight post-apocalyptic levels filled with mechanical monsters.

Rastan Saga II

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Opera House. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

Despite being slower, clunkier, and in general less enjoyable than the original *Rastan* (Taito, 1987), this game is nevertheless a nice port of Taito's 1989 arcade version of *Rastan II* (sans the two-player simultaneous mode). Gamers guide the titular barbarian as he walks, does a little platforming, and uses his sword to battle such enemies as skeleton butlers, muscular snakes, long-clawed demons, centaurs, Medusas, spiny turtles, and flying, spear-wielding demons. Rastan can swing his sword over his head left and right, and he can crouch and

perform a jump-thrust maneuver. He can also use his shield to defend himself and change his standard sword-and-shield for a long sword or an iron claw. Other items offer extra time, sword power-ups (flames and lightning), protective skeletons, physical power restoration, and more. Enemy A.I. has been dumbed down from the first game in the series, and Rastan himself is bigger and less agile (though he wasn't exactly a gymnast to begin with). Followed by: *Warrior Blade: Rastan Saga Episode III* (arcade, 1991).

R.B.I. Baseball 3

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The second baseball release for the Genesis (*Tommy Lasorda Baseball* was the first), *R.B.I. Baseball 3* features 26 pro teams (denoted by city, but not official logo or mascot), each consisting of 24 Major Leaguers, including such stars as Wade Boggs, Jose Canseco, and Mark McGwire. Plus, the game has two All-Star teams and every division winner from the 1983–1989 seasons. Passwords save progress (gamers must defeat all the teams before entering the playoffs), but there is no seasonal play or changeable stats. Instant replays are available, and Watch mode lets players kick back and take in a computer-controlled game. The view of the action is from behind the batter, with windows showing first and third base, and the perspective switches to overhead when the ball is hit into play. A small radar screen helps players keep track of a hit ball. Also released for the NES. Preceded by *R.B.I. Baseball* (NES) and *R.B.I. Baseball 2* (NES).

R.B.I. Baseball 4

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Updated for the 1991 season, *R.B.I. Baseball 4* features 26 teams (denoted by city, but not official logo or mascot), each fielding real Major League players. Plus, the game has All-Star teams from 1989 to 1991 and division winners from 1983 to 1991. A number of fresh features have been added, including 26 pro stadiums modeled after their real life counter-

parts, cinema scenes (appearing in the first and third base windows), Home Run Derby action, and Game Breakers mode, the latter of which lets players engage in a series of 17 specific scenarios, including the fabled “top of the ninth with the bases loaded.” Standard modes of play include: Single Game, Play Division, Best of Seven, and Play All Teams. Followed by: *R.B.I. Baseball '93*.

R.B.I. Baseball '93

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The follow-up to *R.B.I. Baseball 4*, *R.B.I. Baseball '93* sticks closely to its immediate progenitor's formula, offering 700 real Major Leaguers and 26 teams, each designated by city name (though not by official logo or mascot). The game also includes two All-Star teams, division winners from 1984 to 1992, and all 26 Major League ballparks based on their real life counterparts. As in the previous games in the series, hitting is a simple matter of timing the swing, and pitching, which is also simple, lets players guide the ball with the d-pad after the ball has been thrown. New modes of play include Fielding Practice and Create Teams, the latter of which lets gamers form their own team using any of the players. Once again, a small radar screen helps players determine where to position their fielder to make a catch (since the field is shown in close-up during fielding plays).

R.B.I. Baseball '94

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Although similar to the previous game in the series (arcade-like action, cartoonish players with real names, simplistic batting and pitching, less-than-brilliant computer A.I.), *R.B.I. Baseball '94* does have a respectable number of new features, including faster gameplay, a stamina bar for pitchers, better animation (via rotoscoping), a full 162-game season, the inclusion of the new expansion teams (Florida and Colorado), and new music and sound effects (including the voice of announcer Jack Buck). Eight hundred Major Leaguers are on

hand (complete with color portraits), as are 28 teams (each denoted by city name, but not logo or mascot) and their respective stadiums. Modes of play include: Practice, Single Game, Season, Create Teams, Game Breakers, and Home Run Derby. Also released for the Game Gear. Followed by: *RBI Baseball '95* (32X).

Red Zone

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Zyrinx. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

Embellished with full-motion video, rotating textured backgrounds, and 3D vector sprite objects, *Red Zone* is easily one of the most impressive looking (and playing) games in the Genesis library. Players pilot an AH-64B Apache chopper as it flies around shooting air-to-ground rockets, air-to-ground homing helifires, air-to-air homing stingers, and other weapons at a variety of targets. The chopper contains three soldiers, each outfitted with different weapons for various on-foot missions taking place inside buildings. *Red Zone* evokes the *Strike* series, but with a top-down view of the action and shorter levels. Also by Zyrinx: *Sub-Terrania*.

The Ren & Stimpy Show Presents:

Stimpy's Invention

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Stimpy's Mutate-O-Matic invention has exploded, prompting Ren (a neurotic Chihuahua) and Stimpy (a moronic cat) to run, jump, and otherwise journey through six areas, including the zoo, the dog pound, and Ren and Stimpy's house. The cartoon duo must dodge obstacles and battle birds, monkeys, ice monsters, construction workers, lawn mowers, Lump & Loaf, Kodiak Marmosets, and other enemies. Gameplay is cooperative, meaning one player controls flyswatter-wielding Ren while the other guides hairball-coughing Stimpy (in one-player mode, the gamer can swap control between characters at any time, with the other character following along via computer control). By teaming up, Ren and

Stimpy can use a variety of unconventional (not to mention humorous) maneuvers, such as Ren rolling Stimpy like a bowling ball, Stimpy spinning Ren's ears to initiate flight, and Ren and Stimpy propelling themselves forward with flatulence power. Powered Toast Man is on hand to rescue Ren and Stimpy from deep pits. A nice take on John Kricfalusi's wacky, wonderful, oftentimes grotesque animated series, which began on Nickelodeon in 1991 and ran for five seasons.

The Revenge of Shinobi

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

A beautifully illustrated, vibrantly scored (by Yuzo Koshiro) sequel to the great *Shinobi* arcade and Master System game, *The Revenge of Shinobi* eliminates the child rescuing aspect of its progenitor, and the super jump has been replaced with a less-than-reliable double jump. The action remains wonderfully similar, however, with the ever-resourceful, ever-agile master ninja Musashi walking, crouching, somersaulting, and jumping (over some tough gaps—platforming is more difficult this time out) through eight levels, including Tokyo, Detroit, New York, and The Military Base. To ward off the inevitable bevy of baddies (which include ninjas, musclemen, machine gunners, attack dogs, and kung fu gangs), Musashi uses a dagger, shurikens (throwing knives), and ninjitsu (ninja magic), the latter of which is selectable. Due to copyright concerns, enemies resembling Godzilla, Spider-Man, and Batman were taken out of later production runs. A Genesis launch title, *Revenge* was released the same year as *Shadow Dancer* (arcade). Followed by: *Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi* (Genesis) and *Shinobi II: The Silent Fury* (GG).

Revolution X

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Rage Software. First-Person Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Revolution X for the Genesis is based on Midway's 1994 arcade game, but with less blood, no light gun support, no vocals during the Aerosmith songs, no three-player mode,

and heavily pixelated graphics. Players use the d-pad to guide a gunsight around scrolling levels, shooting moving and non-moving people and objects, including items that reveal such power-ups as a super gun, CDs, laserdiscs (which are more powerful than CDs), shields, skull bombs, and energizing wheat grass shakes. Objectives include freeing dancing girls from Los Angeles Club X, destroying helicopters, shooting your way inside a chemical factory in the Amazon Jungle, traveling to the Middle East to free teens from a mind-control camp, destroying a chemical warehouse in the Pacific Rim, and facing down the Headmistress at a Wembley Stadium Aerosmith concert. Shooting is near constant, and the game is hard (numerous continues are a must), but it still manages to be dull, thanks to repetitive gameplay, mindless action, and certain areas that take seemingly forever to get past. Also released for the SNES, Saturn, and PSX.

Richard Scarry's Busytown

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Educational/General, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the children's television series, *The Busy World of Richard Scarry* (1994–1998), *Richard Scarry's Busytown* employs its source material nicely, with players using Lowly Worm's applecopter to enter six different parts of town: Building the House, The Delivery Truck, Captain Salty, Bruno's Deli, The Wind, and The Fire Station. Guided by text, onscreen prompts, and a surprisingly large amount of voice effects (which are scratchy, but adequate), players, as Worm's friend Huckle Cat, perform a variety of tasks, from serving customers food to repairing a ship to delivering things to controlling pesky gusts of wind. This Sega Club title is colorful (if short), preschoolers will enjoy it, and it is easy to pick up and play without referring to the manual. Compatible with the Sega Mega Mouse.

Rings of Power

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Naughty Dog Software. Isometric Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

In *Rings of Power*, players must band together six powerful magic users (including

sorcerers, magicians, necromancers, conjurers, and enchanters) for an epic quest to find 11 powerful rings that are needed to free the lost world from the Demon Void. Going against the conventions of most RPGs, *Rings of Power* lacks traditional armor and weaponry — only magic is used for the turn-based battles. Luckily, players can cast more than 100 different animated spells on their opponents, including creating a twister, transforming into a dragon, and summoning a tidal wave. Other activities include sailing a pirate ship, riding a T-Rex, bribing people, curing a priest, breaking an old woman's curse, finding keys, interacting and trading with residents of 30 towns (each of which contains heroes and villains), and much more. Characters act differently during the day than they do at night. Areas to explore in this difficult, decidedly non-linear game include caves, a volcano, swamps, jails, towers, temples, cathedrals, and more. *Wizardry* and *Ultima* fans should find something to like in *Rings of Power*, which borrows story elements from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Risk

Publisher: Parker Brothers. Developer: Sculptured Software. Board Game, 1–6 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Risk for the Genesis lets armchair generals play Parker Brothers' legendary board game without the clutter and potential loss of cards and pieces. All of the original game's rules are intact as up to six players (including one player against five computer opponents) defend their countries, capture new territories, occupy vast continents, and build world-conquering armies. There are three difficulty levels (Beginner, Intermediate, and Expert), battlefield sound effects accompany the action, and cannons take the place of the more traditional dice. The game board depicts a world map, and the computer offers the option of showing battle animations. The computer can also randomly assign territories. Moreover, a special split-screen Arcade mode puts each player behind a cannon, using their aiming skills to hit troops running across the battlefield. This latter mode does a good job of utilizing the uniqueness of the video game medium. Also released for the PlayStation.

Risky Woods

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Zeus Soft/Dinamic Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

The evil Draxos has turned the town's monks into statues, unleashing skeletons, rotting corpses, face-gripping fiends, and other enemies into Risky Woods. There are more than 20 enemy types in all. Outfitted with throwing knives, warrior Rohan must free the monks and battle the fantasy creatures through 12 levels of play. To acquire advanced weaponry (axes, boomerangs, fireballs, magic daggers, and morning stars), Rohan must defeat Gatekeepers, which chant tunes that must be repeated by pressing combinations on the d-pad (an unusual gameplay element at the time). Other items to equip include lightning (temporary invulnerability), skulls (Rohan's staff becomes a magic weapon), and more. Standard platforming/shooting action complemented by nice graphics and challenging gameplay. Adapted from the 1992 computer game, which had shops for purchasing items.

Ristar

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

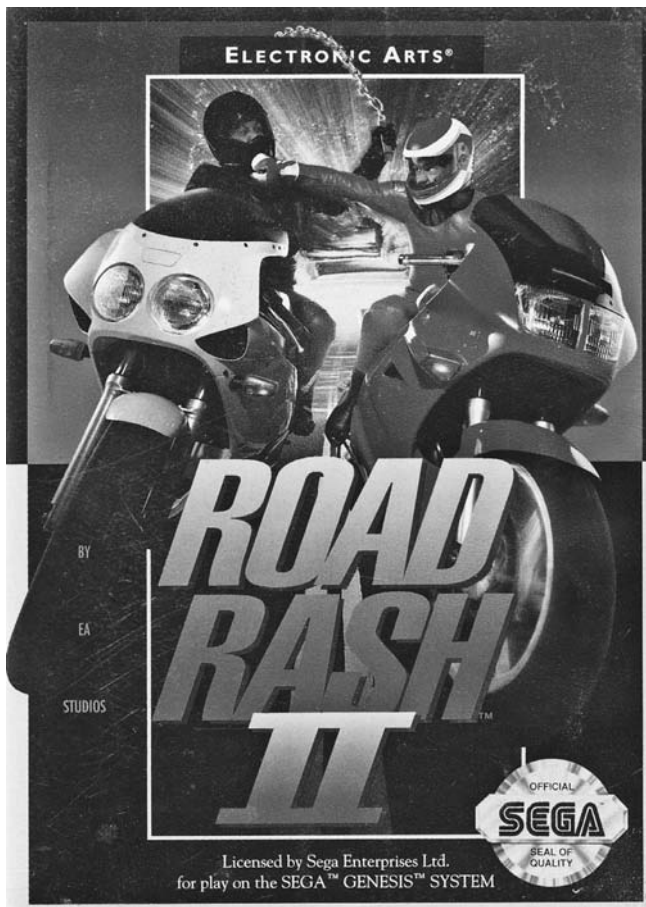
A perky platformer developed by Sega's Sonic Team (creators of *Sonic the Hedgehog*), *Ristar* stars a likable little fellow with an unusual attack method — his stretchable arms grab onto the rabbits, sea horses, lizards, and other enemies populating the game's seven levels and smash them against his star-shaped head. Ristar's arms are also good for climbing, swinging, swimming, throwing, and opening treasure chests. A special meteor strike maneuver, in which Ristar grabs a star handle and spins like crazy, sends the character soaring

to new heights. Light puzzles, smooth difficulty progression, and large, colorful worlds make *Ristar* worth picking up. Also released for the Game Gear.

Road Rash

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

Like *Hang On*, *Road Rash* is viewed from behind the motorcycle, with players speeding down twisting, turning streets. However, *Road Rash* adds the thrills, chills, and spills of punching, kicking, and using a club to knock other racers (who fight back) off the tracks. Speed is of the essence, but players must be careful to avoid cows, deer, cars, sand, gravel, trees, and



The *Road Rash* series lets players bash other motorcyclists with weapons, making for a good (if irreverent) time.

oil slicks. Going too slow brings on Officer O'Leary, who will fine you or even throw you in jail. Courses include Sierra Nevada, Pacific Coast, Redwood Forest, Palm Desert, and Grass Valley, each characterized by a rocking soundtrack and different roadside and background scenery. Performing well in races grants players cash to purchase eight superior motorcycles, such as the Bonzai 750 and the Diablo 1000. *Road Rash* could use a higher frame rate to make it run smoother, but it's nevertheless a highly entertaining game with good controls and a nice mix of combat and racing. Released before the furor surrounding *Mortal Kombat*, *Road Rash* was considered a violent, irreverent game, creating some controversy at the time. Also released for the Sega CD, 3DO, GB, GBC, GG, Saturn, and PSX.

Road Rash II

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1992.

Road Rash II plays a lot like *Road Rash*, but with one significant upgrade: two-player split-screen action. Unfortunately, said mode is virtually unplayable thanks to a horribly slow frame rate. Fortunately, the rest of the upgrades are welcome, including slightly better graphics, a new chain weapon, post-race animations, mooing (as opposed to silent) cows, 15 new motorcycles (including nitro equipped superbikes), and five new courses: Hawaii, Arizona, Tennessee, Alaska, and Vermont (each with five different levels). The music doesn't rock as hard as in the original game, so you might want to crank up some AC/DC or Alice in Chains while you cruise down the tracks, racing against 14 other drivers, busting heads and taking names.

Road Rash 3

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Monkey Do Productions. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1995.

Road Rash 3 repeats the formula established by the first two games in the series, but features more realistic looking racers and seven different countries to cruise through: United

Kingdom, Kenya, Italy, Germany, Japan, Australia, and Brazil. Plus, players can now carry up to seven different weapons (including nunchakus and a mace) and upgrade the following motorcycle attributes individually: performance, protection, tires, and suspension. It's not as easy to connect on hits as in the original game, but the split-screen action carried over from *Road Rash II* runs more smoothly thanks to a higher frame rate. There are 15 different motorcycles to purchase with race winnings, and cops now travel in three different vehicles: motorcycles, patrol cars, and helicopters. *Road Rash 3* is essentially more of the same, but hardcore fans of the series probably won't mind. Followed by: *Road Rash 64* (N64), *Road Rash 3D* (PSX), and *Road Rash: Jailbreak* (GBA, PSX).

RoadBlasters

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Sterling Silver Software. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 player. 1991.

Despite a conspicuous lack of voice effects, *RoadBlasters* is an excellent port of Atari's 1987 arcade game. Players, viewing the action from behind their sleek, futuristic, shiny red car, speed down the twisting, turning streets of Bubble City, Desert Region, Sunset Strip, and other areas (there are 50 levels in all), avoiding mines and toxic spills while shooting cars, jeeps, motorcycles, and roadside gun turrets. Players should also avoid or shoot command cars, which are only vulnerable to special weapons that are acquired by catching packs dropped by a support jet. Special weapons include an u.z. cannon (rapid fire), an electro shield (invulnerability), and cruise missiles. There are speed boosts as well. Unlike *Spy Hunter* and *Pole Position* (two classics *RoadBlasters* borrows from), fuel, which is gathered by running over globes and reaching check points, is a major strategic consideration. The fuel factor made the arcade original (which benefitted from a steering wheel) suck up lots of quarters, so it's nice to continue for free in this version. Fast, fun, and furious, *RoadBlasters* was also released for the NES and Atari Lynx.

RoboCop 3

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Eden Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

When you sit down to play *RoboCop 3*, proceed immediately to the options screen and add extra lives and continues, and set the game on Easy. This is a tough game, mainly because enemies will frequently attack from three different directions. You will frequently duck to avoid enemy fire, but many enemies duck as well, making their fire difficult (and oftentimes impossible) to avoid. RoboCop works his way through six levels (including Cadillac Heights and OCP Headquarters), shooting such enemies as bikers, splatter punks (armed with pistols and rocket launchers), Airborne Rehab soldiers, Ninja robots, and other enemies. In four

of the levels, RoboCop walks and jumps, but in two of the levels he dons a jet pack for side-scrolling flight. He begins with a single shot pistol, but can upgrade to a much-needed flame thrower, missile launcher, 3-way pistol, and laser gun. Ammo is limited, meaning RoboCop must sometimes rely on his fists. Based on the awful 1993 feature film, *RoboCop 3* would be a far better game if it were less difficult. The SNES version has nicer graphics and more convincing sound effects. Also released for the NES and Game Gear.

RoboCop Versus The Terminator

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Virgin Games. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

RoboCop Versus The Terminator is based on the Dark Horse comic book series, which blended two of Hollywood's most famous blockbuster franchises. Players guide a surprisingly agile, surprisingly quick RoboCop as he walks, climbs, jumps, and shoots his way through 10 levels of play (including Detroit, Skynet, the OCP Office Complex, and the Terminator Outpost), blowing away robotic dogs, Endoskeletons, Terminators, and other enemies. RoboCop begins with a pistol, but he can find laser guns, grenade launchers, plasma rifles, ED-209 Gatling guns, bazookas, flame throwers, and homing missile guns. He can only carry two weapons at once, but all the weapons offer unlimited use. Nice graphics, smooth difficulty progression, and fun run-and-gun action make the decidedly violent *RoboCop Versus The Terminator* a must-own for action fans. The SNES version has fewer weapons and less graphic violence, but it does offer a first-person shooter level and narrative cut scenes. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear.



RoboCop 3 is a hard game, but playing it is easier than watching the execrable 1993 film.

Rock N' Roll Racing

Publisher: Interplay Productions. Developer: Blizzard Entertainment. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

One of the more highly regarded racing games of the 16-bit era, *Rock N' Roll Racing* is somewhat similar to *Championship Pro-Am*, with players driving laps around twisting, turning tracks that are viewed from an isometric perspective. The game boasts five funky hotrods to drive, six planets to race on (each with 16 different tracks), and digitized instrumental takes on such rock music classics as “Bad to the Bone,” “Paranoid,” “Born to Be Wild,” “Highway Star,” and “Radar Love” (the “Peter Gunn Theme” is also included, but it’s

an odd fit). Placing in the top three (of four) cars lets players earn points to advance and money to purchase such items as a plasma rifle, rogue missiles, mines, slip sauce (oil slicks), engines, tires, shocks, and armor. Racing takes precedence over shooting and dropping hazards on the track, but it’s highly satisfying to blow away a car in order to pass it, especially when nearing the finish line. The Genesis game is a little faster than the SNES version, but has slightly downgraded graphics and sounds. Both feature a split-screen two-player mode. Also released for the Game Boy Advance.

Rocket Knight Adventures

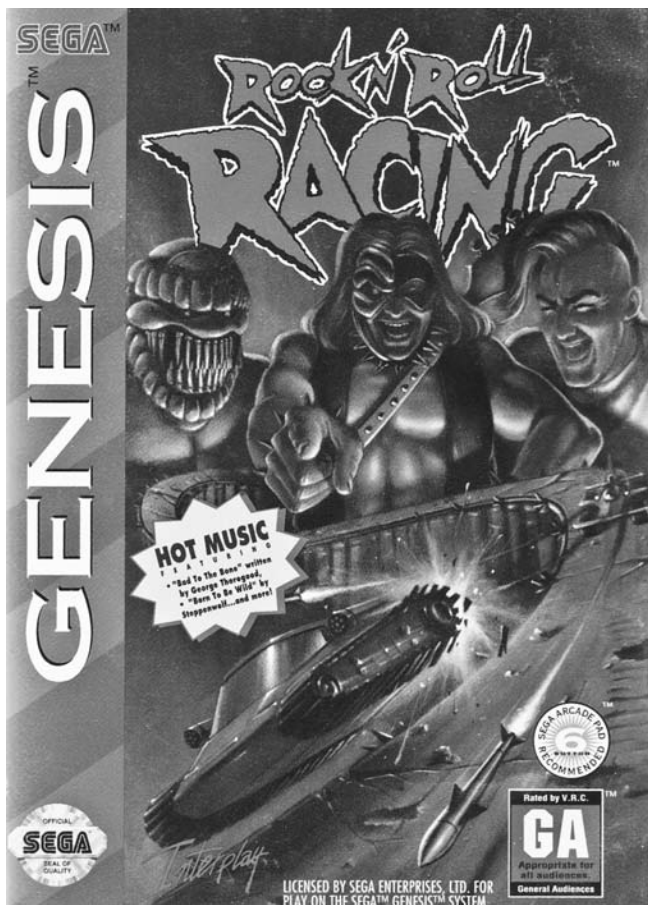
Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

One of the better (if often overlooked) platformers of the era, *Rocket Knight Adventures* takes an armor-clad opossum named Sparkster through seven highly divergent levels: Kingdom of Zebulos, Mountain Range, Going Underground, Flying Battleship, Kingdom of Devotindos, Deep Space, and The Pig Star! Sparkster is armed with a rocket, a sword, and a spinning attack for battling pig soldiers, pulsating plasma blasters, pig tanks, armored pigs, raccoon robots, and 17 creatively designed bosses. He can also use his tail to swing on trees, and there are times when he must swim, ride a rail cart, and do some *Gradius*-like shooting. Humor, cool graphical effects, and a terrific musical score complement the nicely animated action. Followed by: *Sparkster*.

Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Like the SNES version, *Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball* for the



Rock N' Roll Racing features instrumental versions of such hard rock staples as Deep Purple’s “Highway Star” and Black Sabbath’s “Paranoid.”

Genesis has the expected graphical improvements (richer coloring, more detail) over the original NES game. However, the Genesis rendition keeps intact the Ask the Rocket Mode (with tips from Clemens), which the SNES rendition inexplicably leaves out. The Genesis game also has errors and the choice of controller configuration, making it clearly the better of the two 16-bit versions. The most distinguishing aspect of the game, carried over from the NES original, is the over-the-shoulder fielding perspective, which is in the outfield looking toward home plate. Modes of play include Exhibition and Regular Season, the latter of which consists of 33 or 39 games (depending on the league selected) and a Championship Series.

Rolling Thunder 2

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Namco. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

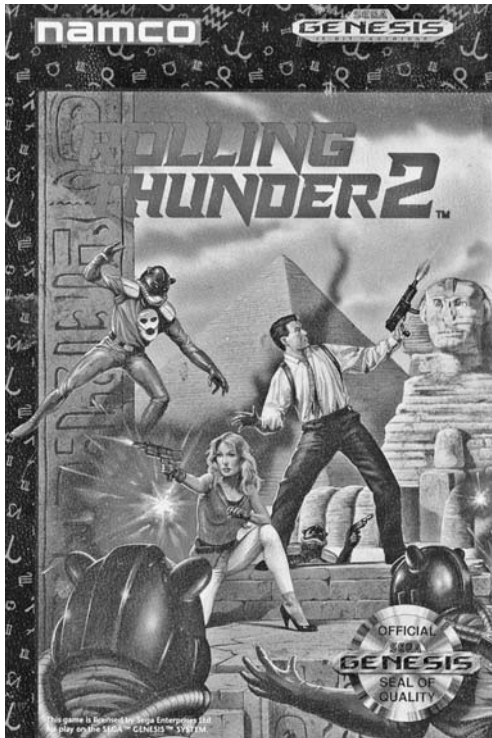
When compared to its coin-op counterpart (Namco, 1990), *Rolling Thunder 2* for the

Genesis is a nice port (despite inferior sound), plus it adds a few new features: cuts scenes between levels, three new levels, and two new weapons: flame gun and shot cluster, the latter of which consists of six pulse lasers mounted together on one rifle stock. Unlike the original *Rolling Thunder* (arcade, 1986), *RT2* offers two-player simultaneous action and lets gamers select the beautiful Leila as a playable character. Gameplay remains much the same (a good thing), with players running across platforms and up and down stairs, jumping over gaps and other obstacles, ducking under enemy fire, hiding behind doors (and then popping out from behind said doors), and shooting bad guys and creatures (the standard weapon is a sub-machine gun).

Rolling Thunder 3

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Now Production. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

Despite its lineage, *Rolling Thunder 3* does not have an arcade cousin, making it a Gene-



The *Rolling Thunder* series, which began in the arcades in 1986, offers a fine mix of running, jumping, and shooting.

sis exclusive. Regrettably, the game removes the two-player simultaneous mode found in *Rolling Thunder 2*, but it does add diagonal fire, the ability to shoot while jumping, three hidden levels, a special secondary weapon (from a selectable screen of nine weapons, including a cannon, grenades, a bazooka, and a laser), and a close-up knifing maneuver (for when players are out of ammo or lack a special weapon). In addition, there are now vehicle stages where players ride a motorcycle or jet skis. Levels no longer have a time limit (making for a more beatable game), but the run-and-gun action is still hot and heavy.

Rolo to the Rescue

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Victordean. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Like many platformers of the era, *Rolo to the Rescue* is insufferably cute, but highly challenging. Players guide a circus elephant through more than 60 cartoon-like levels, unlocking cages to free trapped animals (moles, beavers, squirrels, and the like), three of which can follow the elephant at any time. Rolo can run (though he tends to slide after stopping), jump on enemies, and grab power-ups for shrinking, floating, and shooting. However, players must sometimes switch control to an animal friend to perform certain tasks (digging, swimming, climbing, and the like), meaning there are lots of puzzles to solve.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms II

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1–12 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms II is the sequel to *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (computers, NES), which first appeared as a 1985 Japanese computer game called *Sangokushi*. On a mission to unify ancient China, which is comprised of 41 different provinces, players select from six scenarios: Dong Zhuo Seizes Loyang, Rivals Struggle for Power, Aged Liu Bei Hides, Cao Cao Covets Control of China, Nation Breaks into 3 Divisions, and The Three-way Contest. As a leader from China's past,

such as the noble Liu Bei or the merciless Cao Cao, players perform a variety of tasks, including: invading enemy cities; negotiating truces; bribing rival officers; tricking rival rulers into fighting one another; discovering mystic relics that increase power; setting fire to enemy units; appointing advisors and governors; teaming up to carry out joint invasions on mutual enemies; dealing with disasters (floods, rebellions, plagues, and the like); and much more. The game has more than 200 different characters, each of whom is rated according to intelligence, charm, and war ability. Also released for the NES and SNES.

Romance of the Three Kingdoms III: Dragon of Destiny

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Turn-Based Strategy, 1–8 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Taking place after the fall of the Han Dynasty, *Dragon of Destiny* puts players in control of one of 33 different rulers (such as Cao Rui or Liu Chan), including six who are new to the series. The player's job is to occupy and reunite the country, which consists of 46 provinces. Gameplay consists of: selecting commanders; drafting and hiring soldiers to fortify armies and navies; recruiting officers; negotiating truces; bribing rival officers; forcing rivals to fight one another; moving units across a battle map (there are 17 different types of terrain); preparing for disasters (plagues, floods, revolts, and the like); bartering with merchants; transferring gold and other goods; building galleys for naval battles; waging war on neutral ground; storming enemy castles; scorching enemy lands with fire attacks; launching attacks with cavalry, crossbow, and naval combat units; and much more. Game scenarios include Dong Zhuo's Rivals Unite, The Chaotic Era Begins, Cao Cao's Power Expands, Zhuge Liang Plots Strategy, Liu Bei Builds Shu Kingdom, and Three Kingdom Fights Decay. Includes more than 500 historical characters. Also released for the SNES. Followed by: *Romance of the Three Kingdoms IV: Wall of Fire* (SNES, Saturn, PSX), *Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI: Awakening of the Dragon* (PSX), and other sequels.

Rugby World Cup 95

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Rugby, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A cross of sorts between football and soccer, *Rugby World Cup 95* brings the relatively obscure (at least in America) sport to the Sega Genesis. The game is backed by exclusive World Cup licensing and features all the staples of professional rugby, including passes, kicks (including meter-based kickoffs and penalty kicks), tackles, lineouts, dives, mauls, rucks, and scrums. In addition, players can break tackles and put on bursts of speed. There are more than 100 player moves in all. Thirty international teams are present, including squads from Australia, England, New Zealand,

and South Africa. Other features include: more than 2,000 frames of animation; variable weather and field conditions; adjustable game lengths; action and simulation games; offsides turned on or off; and four modes of play: Friendly (exhibition), World Cup, World Cup 95, and Demo (computer controls the teams). The game was produced by the creators of *FIFA International Soccer* (a good thing) and is viewed from an isometric perspective.

Sagaia

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Though it lacks a two-player simultaneous mode (and, of course, a three-monitor setup), *Sagaia* for the Genesis is a nice port of the Taito arcade game, *Darius II* (1989). Despite some redundancy in level design, it's a solid entry in the popular *Darius* series, which began in the arcades in 1986. Gameplay is of the hardcore "shmup" variety, with players flying to the right through 28 selectable stages, shooting an assortment of mechanical fish creatures (a *Darius* trademark). Color-coded power-ups enable the ship to increase its missile, bomb, defensive, and laser powers. Released the same year as *Darius Twin* for the SNES. Followed by: *Darius Gaiden* (arcade, Saturn) and *G. Darius* (arcade, PSX).

Saint Sword

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Side-Scrolling Combat/Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1991.

On paper, *Saint Sword* sounds awesome. The sword-slashing protagonist can morph into a centaur, a birdman, and a fishman, and he can perform such magical feats as freeze enemies, become invulnerable, and flash bolts of lightning. He travels through a variety of exotic locales, including



The oddly titled *Sagaia* is actually the Genesis version of *Darius II*, the popular side-scrolling shooter.

the Dreamland of Thorns, the Fairy Forest, and the Graveyard of Warriors, each of which contains a hidden key and a tough boss. Unfortunately, the controls are sluggish, the battles are redundant, and the lead character(s) moves with little grace or flair.

Samurai Shodown

Publisher: Takara. Developer: Saurus. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Despite missing a few things from SNK's 1993 arcade/Neo Geo game (including certain frames of animation, a few basic moves, post-fight cinemas, and the character Earthquake), *Samurai Shodown* for the Genesis is a playable port, especially with a six-button controller. The game looks and plays something like *Street Fighter II*, but each fighter (11 in all) is equipped with a sword or other weapon. Certain warriors can even unleash animal-based special moves (though this can cause slowdown). In the original, the camera would zoom in and out, but in the Genesis version the characters appear large at all times. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, 3DO, and Sega CD. Followed by: *Samurai Shodown II* (arcade/Neo Geo, Neo Geo CD), *Samurai Shodown Sen* (Xbox 360), and other sequels.

Saturday Night Slam Masters

Publisher: Capcom. Developer: Capcom. Sports/Wrestling/Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Saturday Night Slam Masters is fun, arcade-style action all the way, incorporating *Street Fighter II*-type visuals and such fighting moves as cyclone kicks, sonic fists, and a special tsunami attack into the wrestling formula. The view is from the side, and the screen scrolls a bit to show the entire playfield, with a highly animated crowd looking on. Fights oftentimes spill outside of the ring, where bottles, tables, and chairs come into play. There are 10 large wrestlers from which to choose, each with character-specific attacks, such as Haggar's spinning piledriver (as in Mike Haggar from *Final Fight*), Rasta's dread lock drop, and Stingray's jalapeno comet. The Genesis rendition lacks the four-player Battle Royal mode

found in Capcom's 1993 arcade original, meaning the Super Nintendo version is the better, more faithful of the two ports. However, the Genesis game does have an exclusive Death Match mode in which barbed wire ropes, weaponry, and exploding mines make the ring an especially treacherous fighting environment.

Scholastic's The Magic School Bus: Space Exploration Game

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Novotrade. Educational/Science, 1 player. 1995.

Based on the children's book series by Joanna Cole (and on the resultant PBS television series), *The Magic School Bus* does a nice job combining fantasy, humor, science, adventure, and classic arcade action. Players must drive a bus to the moon and each planet in the solar system (other than the Earth), shooting asteroids and taking photos of objects (a space station, a Sega Saturn, and more), making sure to fly into blue fuel orbs along the way. Shooting three gold asteroids lets gamers engage in an *Asteroids*-style mini-game. Once the destination planet has been reached, a *Lunar Lander*-type landing sequence kicks in. After the bus has landed, players walk along the surface of the planet in a platforming sequence (starring Ralphie trying to rescue Ms. Frizzle) that is supplemented by driving in a rover and flying in a lander. After the platforming stage, players must solve a puzzle (shuffle pieces to create a picture) and a memory game (match up a word with a picture). A *Breakout* clone is included in the package as well. Other than the Sega Pico version of this title, this is the only console-based game in the series. It is easily one of the better Sega Club titles.

Scooby-Doo Mystery

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment/Sunsoft. Developer: Illusions. Third-Person Graphic Adventure, 1 player. 1995.

A faithfully adapted take on the classic cartoon series, *Scooby-Doo Mystery* has players guiding Shaggy (with Scooby tagging along) through two interactive cartoon adventures: Blake's Hotel, in which a ghost is scaring all the customers away; and Ha Ha Carnival, which is

haunted by a phantom clown. To solve each mystery, players must interact with characters and items by selecting from the following commands: push, pull, talk, open, close, eat, take, look, give, and use. This is much different than the more action-oriented SNES game of the same name and will appeal to fans of *Maniac Mansion* (NES).

seaQuest DSV

Publisher: Black Pearl Software. Developer: Sculptured Software. Naval Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the NBC television series, which ran from 1993 to 1996 (the show was renamed *seaQuest 2032* for season three), *seaQuest DSV* puts players at the helm of the titular submarine, cruising in all directions around isometric/overhead view areas, avoiding obstacles and sea life while firing lasers, missiles, and torpedoes at enemy vessels. Picture a water-based *Desert Strike*. Players will also commandeer the crab (mining and recovery vehicle with manipulator arms), the stinger (one-person attack sub), the sea speeder (heavily armored transport vehicle), and the sea truck (multi-purpose transport for people, equipment, and supplies), along with directing the movements of a hyper-reality probe and Darwin the dolphin. Timed missions, which require that players select the best vehicle for the task, include conducting rescues, disarming security systems, recovering sunken treasure, defusing bombs, locating and destroying power relays, repairing a nuclear reactor, rebuilding a life support system, and more. A nice mix of strategy and action. Also released for the SNES.

Sesame Street Counting Cafe

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Educational/Math/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Produced in conjunction with the Children's Television Workshop, *Sesame Street Counting Cafe* puts Grover in the role of a waiter, serving Mr. "Fat Blue" Johnson, as he has done in numerous skits featured on the *Sesame Street* TV series. The game takes place over the course of seven days, with each day

encompassing five meals: breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner, and dessert. In every level, Grover must jump up to grab the correct food items off of shelves and walk them over to Mr. Johnson, who counts each food item as he receives it, gobbling everything up after the order has been completed. A number of other Sesame Street characters appear, including Ernie, Bert, Farley, and Cookie Monster, the latter of whom cleans Grover's tray if he screws up (the other characters throw food at Grover or try to grab food off of his tray). The music in *Counting Cafe* is as redundant as the gameplay, but preschoolers will derive some enjoyment from this Sega Club cartridge.

Shadow Blasters

Publisher: Sage's Creation. Developer: Sigma Enterprises. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Although it pales next to the more popular *Golden Axe*, *Shadow Blasters* does offer decent (if short) entertainment value. At any time, players can select from four different god-powered (though slow-moving) heroes: Horatio, a shuriken-equipped ninja; Tiffany, a crystal-hurling ninja; Marco, a Buddhist monk who unleashes lightning; and Leo, a fencing champ who shoots crescent-shaped projectiles. Grabbing candle icons charges up the characters' weapons, speed, jumping ability, and life gauge. In addition to shooting bats, samurai, and a few other enemy types, players must negotiate tricky platforms, dodge lightning, and otherwise progress through nine levels, including Mountain, Forest, Heavenly Sky, and Space.

Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

The follow-up to *The Revenge of Shinobi* (Genesis), *Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi* is based on *Shadow Dancer* (the subtitle-less Sega coin-op from 1989), but with new levels and bosses. Also, players must now rescue hostages scattered throughout the stages instead of diffusing time bombs. Unlike the original *Shinobi* (arcade, SMS), and unlike *Revenge*,

The Secret of Shinobi equips the ninja protagonist (Joe Musashi) with a barking dog (Yamato) for attacking hard-to-reach enemies. Standard ninja moves include running, jumping, squatting, punching, kicking, using a sabre, and, most prominently, throwing shurikens. In addition, players can use Ninjitsu for three types of magical attacks: meteorites, columns of fire, and tornadoes. The action takes place through five short (though fun and challenging), New York-based levels: Burning Downtown (with nifty wavering flame effects in the background), Battle on the Railway, Statue of Liberty, In the Darkness, and Union Lizard, each nice looking and with dramatic musical accompaniment. During boss battles, the dog is absent, helping make them especially tough to beat. Released the same year as *Alex Kidd in Shinobi World* (SMS). Followed by: *Shinobi III: Return of the Ninja Master*.

Shadow of the Beast

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: WJS Design. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1991.

Embellished with a revenge-themed backstory, *Shadow of the Beast* is a notoriously difficult game. The exact timing of certain platform jumps and punches is important, as is making sure to do various things and grab certain items in the correct order. For example, there are keys to collect for later use, and certain creatures can only be destroyed with special weapons (such as a gun, an energy wave, or stronger punches). In addition to punching, players—as a powerful beast—can jump-kick the various ghosts, bugs, demons, bats, and other enemies (more than 100 types in all), some of which appear suddenly and move very fast, making them hard to avoid. Scenery includes trees, castles, mountains, and a graveyard, and there are lots of ladders to climb. A jetpack/shooting level adds variety. *Shadow of the Beast* is based on the beautifully rendered Amiga computer game (1989) by Psygnosis. The Genesis version runs too fast (which is one reason the game is so hard), but it has good (if distorted) music and nice graphics (which include parallax scrolling). The sound effects are sparse, and the intense difficulty level will test

the patience of most any gamer. Also released for the Lynx and TurboGrafx-CD.

Shadow of the Beast II

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Psygnosis. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Like the first game, *Shadow of the Beast II* forces players to find certain items for use later in the game. For example, there's an axe that will kill a pair of goblins, but if you waste the axe on another enemy, you are doomed. Now in humanoid form, players are still powerful as they run, jump, climb (vines and chains), duck, and battle lots of nicely rendered creatures, some of which deliver cheap hits. Other actions include riding elevators, flipping switches to solve puzzles, listening to characters, using keys to open doors, and much more. Players can now save up to four items in inventory, and the default punching maneuver from *Shadow of the Beast* has been replaced by a chain tethered to a spiked ball, giving attacks a longer range. Also new are three difficulty levels: easier (which is still very hard), normal, and ridiculous. Unlike *Shadow of the Beast*, *Shadow of the Beast II* runs at the proper speed in relation to its respective Amiga forerunner, making for a better port. The Sega CD version has a new and improved soundtrack, full-motion video sequences, and voice-acted dialogue, making it superior to the Genesis version.

Shadowrun

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1994.

Shadowrun takes place in futuristic Seattle (circa 2050), where players, on a quest to uncover the identity of their brother's killer, select from three different upgradeable Shadowrunners (mercenaries for hire) to control: a weapons-using samurai; a computer-savvy decker; and a magic-enhanced mage. Missions require players to break into buildings, deliver packages, battle vampires and street gangs (in real time), and more. The action is depicted from an overhead viewpoint, but switches to first-person when it's time to jack into the

Matrix. Based on FASA's pencil-and-paper cyberpunk RPG, the game is more faithful to its source material than its less complicated, less open-ended SNES counterpart.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

Publisher: Activision. Developer: Home Data. Tile Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Based on the ancient Chinese game Mah-jongg, *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye* is simple to play, yet deviously difficult to beat. The objective is to remove all the tiles from a pyramid (viewed from overhead), two tiles at a time. Each tile in the pyramid has a match. To remove a pair of tiles, players must select a tile along with its match. However, only tiles that are "free" can be selected. A free tile is one that

has nothing on top of it and is open to the left or right. The game ends when the player has removed all the tiles, or when the player can no longer make any legal moves (removing the wrong two tiles leaves no matching pairs). There are 13 different layout types (Shanghai, plus the animals of the zodiac) and eight different tile designs (alphabet, animals, flag, sports, and the like). The sequel to *Shanghai* (arcade, SMS, various), *Shanghai II* adds a special two-player Dragon's Eye mode, in which players take turns with the tiles. One player tries to move all the tiles while the other maneuvers the tiles to prevent this from happening. Also released for the SNES.

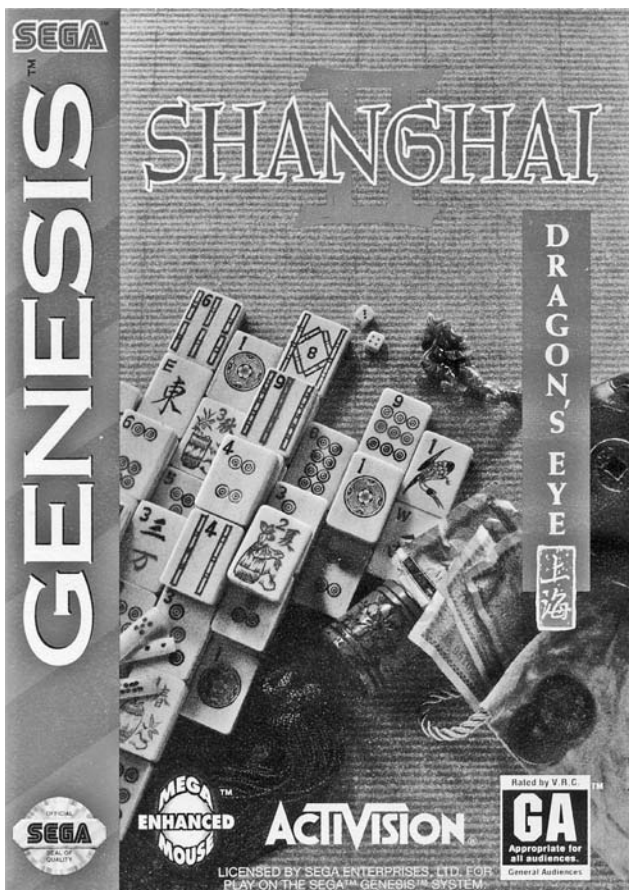
Shaq-Fu

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Delphine Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

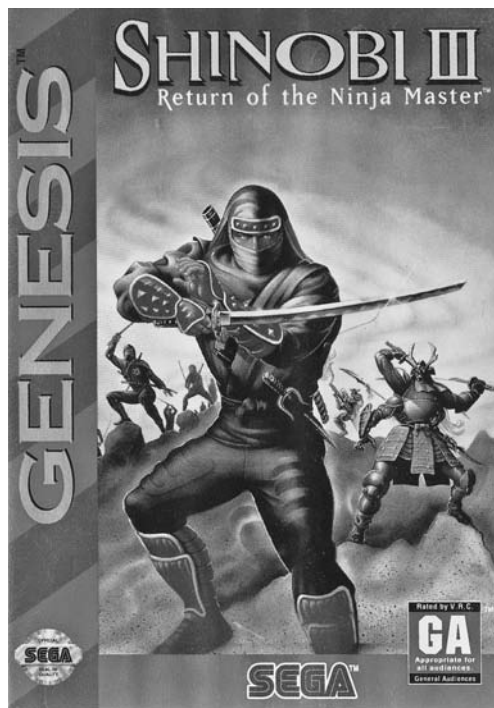
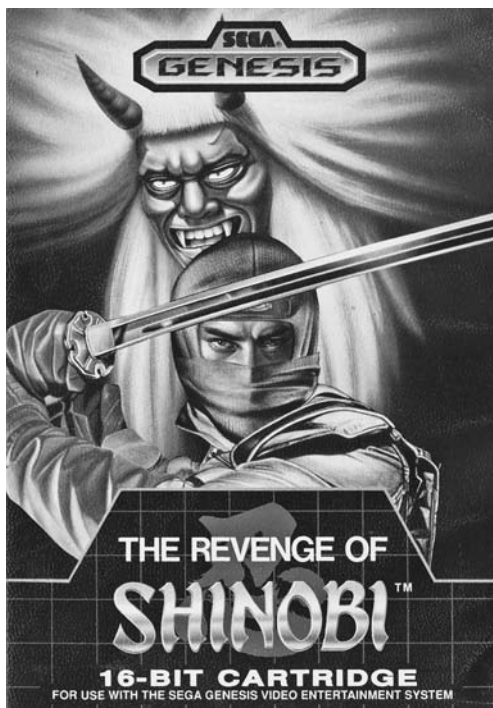
Shaq-Fu suffers from an absurd concept (Shaquille O'Neal as a kung-fu fighter), small characters, and poor controls. The game looks and plays like its Super NES counterpart (meaning the backgrounds and animation are superb), but features five more characters (for a total of 12). Gamers can play as any of the fighters in three modes of play: Duel, Story, and Tournament. Each character has a Fury Bar (which charges when they take damage) and a few special moves, such as Beast's sonic roar, Rajah's thunder clap, and Voodoo's earthquake. While hardly the worst cartridge ever produced, *Shaq-Fu* ranks up there with *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (Atari 2600) and *Superman* (N64) in terms of video games well known for being poorly programmed. Also released for the Game Boy.

Shining Force

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic/Climax Entertainment. Strategy Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1993.



Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye is similar to Mahjongg, the ancient Chinese tile game.



The *Shinobi* series, which debuted in the arcades in 1987 (and the SMS in 1988), is one of Sega's most revered franchises.

The sequel to *Shining in the Darkness*, this complex, strategy-intensive RPG has players battling the forces of darkness to protect the kingdom of Runefaust. This requires journeying across expansive lands, talking to various townsfolk, searching for treasure, adding characters (mages, archers, dragons, and the like) to your party, gaining experience points, and using healing seeds, shield rings, power potions (for increasing attacks), and other items. The turn-based battles against the elves, skeletons, zombies, knights, and other enemies (including bosses) are fought with swords, axes, bows and arrows, spears, magic spells, and other weapons.

Shining Force II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic. Strategy Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1994.

The third game in the *Shining* series, *Shining Force II* puts players on a quest to find the Stones of Light and Dark in order to restore peace to the land of Rune. Viewing the action from overhead, players must travel to various

towns, talk to characters, visit shops, enter abbeys to upgrade party members, and prepare for turn-based battles, which offer a behind-the-character perspective. Parties can contain up to 11 characters (including a dwarf, a centaur, and a mage), each of whom uses specific types of class-based weapons, such as arrows, axes, magic, knives, or swords. Followed by: *Shining Force CD* (Sega CD), *Shining Force III* (Saturn), *Shining Force Neo* (PS2), and *Shining Force EXA* (PS2).

Shining in the Darkness

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Climax Entertainment. First-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

Shining in the Darkness is a “dungeon crawler” that puts players in search of the proverbial princess, battling colorful, nicely illustrated monsters (slugs, pit worms, man-apes, gnomes, spiders) along the way. The game takes place in three different areas: the king's castle, where information is gained and relayed; the town, where players sleep, save their

progress, and buy equipment (such as armor and weapons); and the dungeon, where *Phantasy Star*-like battles are fought. Two computer-controlled characters join the player in his or her quest: a healer and a magician. Followed by: *Shining Force*.

Shinobi III: Return of the Ninja Master

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

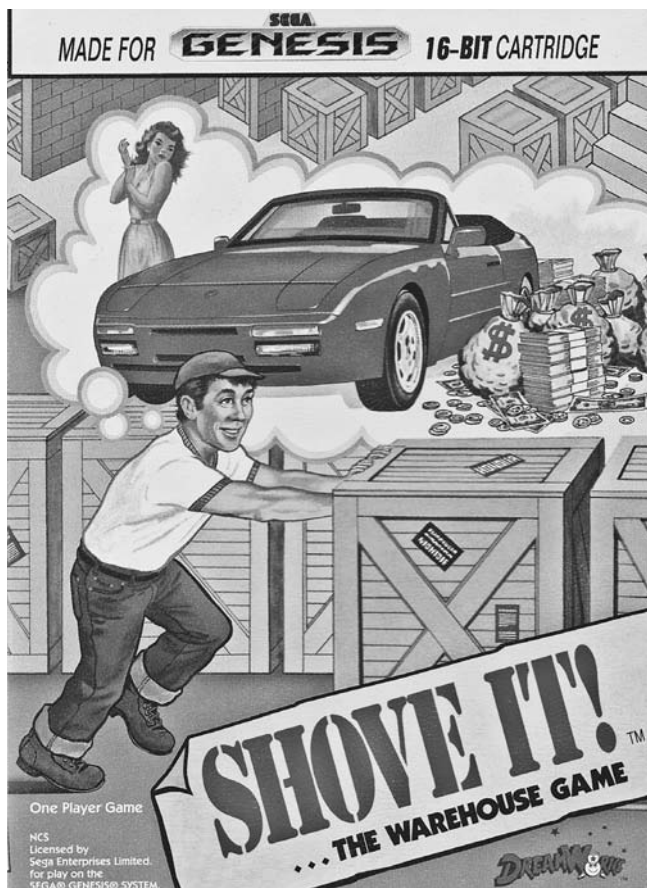
The sequel to *Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi*, *Shinobi III* starts off much like its predecessor, with ninja master Joe Musashi running, jumping, crouching, and throwing shurikens at bad guys. However, as play progresses, Joe will ride a horse and a jet ski, adding variety and speed to an already great formula (the attack dog from *The Secret of*

Shinobi didn't make the cut). Musashi will also spiderwalk hand-over-hand across ceilings, pull off a kabekeri side-to-side wall-climbing maneuver, and battle his way up a moving elevator. In addition, the enemies are more exotic this time out as sci-fi is a prevalent theme. Joe's use of ninjitsu (ninja magic) is the same as in *The Revenge of Shinobi*: Ikazuchi (invulnerability), Kariu (pillars of flame), Fushin (high jumps), and Mijin (living bomb). One of the cornerstones of the Genesis library, *Shinobi III* was followed by *Shinobi Legends* (Saturn) and the PS2 reimaging of *Shinobi* in 3D.

Shove It! ... The Warehouse Game

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: Nippon Computer Systems. Action Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

Viewed from overhead, the fiendishly difficult *Shove It!* has the player, as a warehouse man named Stevedore, shoving boxes in straight lines around a series of warehouses (non-scrolling rooms). In each of the game's 160 warehouses, there are several white dots on the floor denoting where the boxes must go. Frequently, certain boxes must be shoved out of the way before other boxes can be moved to their destination points. For a box to be moved, it must have two unlocked opposite sides, and boxes should not be pushed into corners (unless the corner in question contains a white dot). There is no time limit, passwords save progress, and players can reset each warehouse as many times as needed, staving off potential frustration. An Edit mode is available in which players can create (but not save) their own warehouses. There are no sound effects, and the music is repetitious, but the game's many head-scratching puzzles will please fans of the genre. Similar to: *Boxxle* (GB) and *Boxyboy* (TG-16).



Shove It! is an ingenious puzzler similar to *Boxxle* (GB) and *Boxyboy* (TG).

Side Pocket

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Sports/Billiards, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A nice upgrade over the 1987 NES version, *Side Pocket* for the Genesis has a similar top-down view of the action, but is enhanced with sharper graphics (which include pretty women), a 22-song juke box, and a password feature for saving progress. Instead of progressing through four championship ranks (as in the NES game), players ride a motorcycle (via a mapping screen) across America, competing to meet or beat specific scores in each city. Modes of play include: One-Player Pocket Game, Two-Player Pocket Game, Two-Player Nine-Ball Game, and Trick Game. Also released for the Game Boy, Game Gear, and SNES.

The Simpsons: Bart vs. The Space Mutants

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Imagineering. Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Like the original NES game, *Bart vs. The Space Mutants* for the Genesis finds Bart Simpson working his way through five Springfield locations (Streets, Shopping Mall, Krustyland Amusement Park, Museum of Natural History, and Nuclear Power Planet), collecting, shooting, and spray painting various items to prevent aliens from creating an ultimate weapon. Bart can don X-ray specs to uncover mutants, and he can use rockets to snag out-of-reach items, a wrench to open fire hydrants, weapons (cherry bombs, slingshot, dart gun) to fight bad guys, family members to assist in boss battles, and more. Despite having better graphics than the NES version, the Genesis game suffers similar control problems and is equally frustrating to play. Also released for the Game Gear.

The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Sculptured Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Likes its SNES counterpart, *Bart's Nightmare* is a variety-filled game that takes lovable brat Bart Simpson through six dream-induced

worlds, where he encounters such familiar faces as Monty Burns, Barney Gumble, Mighty Homer Kong, Lisa Simpson (who appears as a fairy and turns him into a frog), Principle Skinner (who puts him in a suit and tie), and Jimbo & the Gang (who slow him down). Bart is equipped with boyish weapons (including a slingshot), but he will also appear as the building-crushing Bartzilla, the whip-wielding Indiana Bart, and the flying Bartman (featuring side-scrolling shooter action). Based on the long-running *The Simpsons* primetime cartoon series.

6-Pak

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Multi-Game Compilation, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Available separately or as a pack-in title with certain Genesis systems (circa 1995), *6-Pak* contains a half dozen previously released Sega Genesis games in one cartridge: *Columns*, *Golden Axe*, *Revenge of Shinobi*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Streets of Rage*, and *Super Hang-On*.

688 Attack Sub

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Electronic Arts. Naval Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1991.

A port of the 1988 Cold War era computer game (sans two-player mode), *688 Attack Sub* puts players in control of a 688 Los Angeles American class submarine or a Russian Alfa class, performing such duties as navigating hostile waters, defending warships, and tracking and attacking enemy subs. Tools and weapons at the player's disposal include a radio, a periscope, a map, a depth gauge, sonar, ballistic rockets, Mark 48 torpedoes, warheads, noise-maker missiles, and more. Fans of *Silent Service* for the NES and *P.T.O.* for the Genesis should enjoy this fairly sophisticated sub simulator.

Skeleton Krew

Publisher: Front Street Publishing. Developer: Core Design. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

In *Skeleton Krew*, players select from three different skeleton warriors (Spin, Joint, and Rib), each of whom totes bombs and an im-

pressive mutant-blasting weapon: a pulverax plasma beam, a crash n' burn blaster, or a tri-blast thrasher. The repetitive, rapid-fire action, which allows for weapon rotation independent of player movement, evokes games like *Robotron: 2084* and *Ikari Warriors*, but with an isometric viewpoint and jumping. Hordes of enemies populate (and re-populate) four lavishly detailed, techno-dungeon worlds (Earth, Mars, Venus, and the Psykogenesis Planet), meaning the screen can get overcrowded and the carnage overly chaotic.

Skitchin'

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Skating/Miscellaneous Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Essentially *Road Rash* on rollerblades, *Skitchin'* has players racing down highways in 12 cities against 14 other skaters, grabbing onto the bumpers of cars to hitch fast rides (the word "skitchin'" is an amalgamation of skating and hitching). To gain an edge, players can punch, kick, and use weapons against their opponents, hence the *Road Rash* comparison. Winning races, doing tricks (jumps, etc.), skitchin', and taking down other racers earns players money for purchasing wheels, skates, knee pads, elbow pads, wrist guards, and gloves. Viewed from behind the player's skater, *Skitchin'* is as fun as it sounds and has the detailed graphics to match.

Slaughter Sport

Publisher: Razorsoft. Developer: Activision. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Based on the pre-*Street Fighter II* fighting game, *Tongue of the Fatman* (1988, PC), *Slaughter Sport* takes place in the year 2550. Fighters throughout the universe have converged on the Arena to prove their strength and skills. In one-player, 17-bout mode, gamers start as martial artist Rex, who can breathe fire (via atomic breath), do back flips, and perform a variety of punches and kicks (including jumping maneuvers). Winning fights unlocks a variety of playable, quirkily designed fighters, including a tough chick with a biting Mohawk, a creature with fangs and wings who spouts

poisonous gasses, a minotaur with deadly horns, a legless monster named Stump, and a web-spinning creature named Spidra. The final boss is Mondu, the Fat Lord of the Fight Palaces. In two-player mode, gamers can select from any of the 17 fighters. Unlike many fighting games, there are no blocking maneuvers, and players can hit their opponent while said opponent is on the ground. In addition, players can bet on fights and purchase weapons. Despite some nifty character designs and weapons (including oil, smog, bees, opponent freeze, extended attack range, and more), *Slaughter Sport* offers mediocre fighting action with jerky animation and poor controls.

Socket

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Vic Tokai. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Socket, which rhymes with sonic, is a shameless *Sonic the Hedgehog* clone. It looks, plays, and even sounds like Sega's venerable classic, but it's not as challenging or as much fun. Gamers guide a time-traveling, lightning bolt gathering "duck with an attitude" through seven different hyper-colorful zones, including Emerald Forest, Stone Age, and Treasure Castle. Socket is a robot duck, and the only concession to originality on the game's part is the necessity for the duck to plug in his tail to replenish energy. Socket kicks his robotic enemies instead of pouncing on top of them like Sonic, but the running, jumping, super fast action feels like *Sonic the Hedgehog* nevertheless, from jumping on spring pads to hopping on moving platforms to racing up large ramps to getting bounced around uncontrollably. A Time Trial mode is available in which gamers can play the High Speed Zone stages sans enemies. As a mascot character, Vic Tokai's Socket comes up lacking. His game is playable, but derivative in the extreme.

Sol-Deace

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Wolf Team. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

In *Sol-Deace*, players pilot a fast, sleekly designed space fighter through six futuristic

sci-fi levels (exemplified by an artificial sun, a giant weapons factory on the moon, and a space station on Pluto), shooting such mechanical terrors as laser guns, robotic arms, and mechanical snakes, all of which were unleashed on mankind by a malevolent computer. There are also bosses to destroy, including Crab Brain, Egg Walker, and Heat Viper. The space fighter shoots blue fire, which can be tripled via power-up. The triple cannons can be adjusted individually for spread fire or to hone in on a specific target, such as a boss, and the ship can upgrade to lasers and bullet bombs. The sound effects could use more oomph, but the constant, busy, hardcore shooter action will appeal to fans of such games as *Gaiques* and the *Thunder Force* series. Released for the Sega CD as *Sol-Feace*. The games are virtually identical, but the CD version adds an anime-style introductory sequence.

Soldiers of Fortune

Publisher: Spectrum HoloByte. Developer: The Bitmap Brothers. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

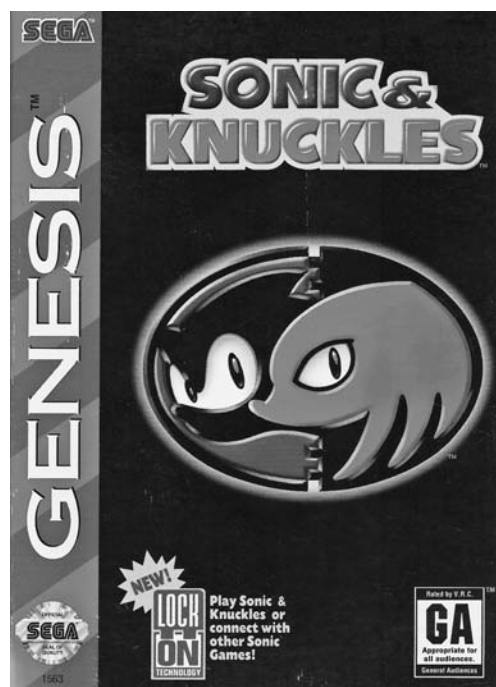
A nice port of *The Chaos Engine* for the Commodore Amiga, *Soldiers of Fortune* lets gamers portray one of six different characters, each differing according to power, health, speed, wisdom, and weaponry (rifle, cannon, ray gun, bombs, landmines, and the like). A second character (controlled by the computer or a human) can participate in the action, which consists of running around four diverse, intricately detailed worlds (The Forest, The Workshop, Fortesque Mansion, The Cellars), destroying frogs, mutants, robots, and other creatures. Multiple pathways, hidden areas, upgradeable characters, and fun two-player action make this a surprisingly deep game. Also released for the SNES.

Sonic & Knuckles

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

In *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*, Sonic destroyed Dr. Robotnik's Death Egg. Victory is short lived, however, as Sonic must now battle his

way through eight new Floating Island zones: Mushroom Hill, Flying Battery, Sandopolis, Lava Reef, Hidden Palace, Sky Sanctuary, Death Egg, and Doomsday, each filled with such enemies as Technosqueak, Mushmeanie, and Butterdroid. Gamers can play as Sonic or Knuckles, the latter of whom can spin dash (like Sonic), glide, and wall climb. The running, jumping, careening action is similar to previous games in the series, but *Sonic & Knuckles* introduces a new Lock-on technology, which lets players plug one of two different cartridges into the top of the S&K cartridge for a different gaming experience. Plugging in *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* lets gamers play *Sonic 2* as Knuckles while plugging in *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* “transforms Floating Island into a huge 34 meg Sonic-epic loaded with new secrets.” In the latter mode, gamers can play as Sonic, Knuckles, or Tails. Two new bonus stages debut: Glowing Spheres, in which players stick to magnetic spheres and jump up to higher ones; and Slot Machine, which has players collecting rings when the tumblers roll. Plugging



By plugging in *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* or *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* to *Sonic & Knuckles*, players can unlock new features.

virtually any other Genesis cartridge into *Sonic & Knuckles* and then pushing A+B+C will unlock a hidden level. Followed by: *Sonic Labyrinth* (GG).

Sonic Classics

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic Team/Sega/Compile. Side-Scrolling Platform/Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1997.

Sonic Classics contains three previously released Sega Genesis games in one cartridge: *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, and *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine*. Released the same year as *Sonic R* (Saturn) and the Saturn version of *Sonic Jam* (the game.com version followed in 1998). Followed by: *Sonic Adventure* (DC), *Sonic Shuffle* (DC), *Sonic Gems Collection* (GC), *Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode I* (PS3, Wii, Xbox 360), and other sequels, collections, and offshoots.

Sonic Spinball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Polygames/Sega. Pinball, 1–4 players (alternating). 1993.

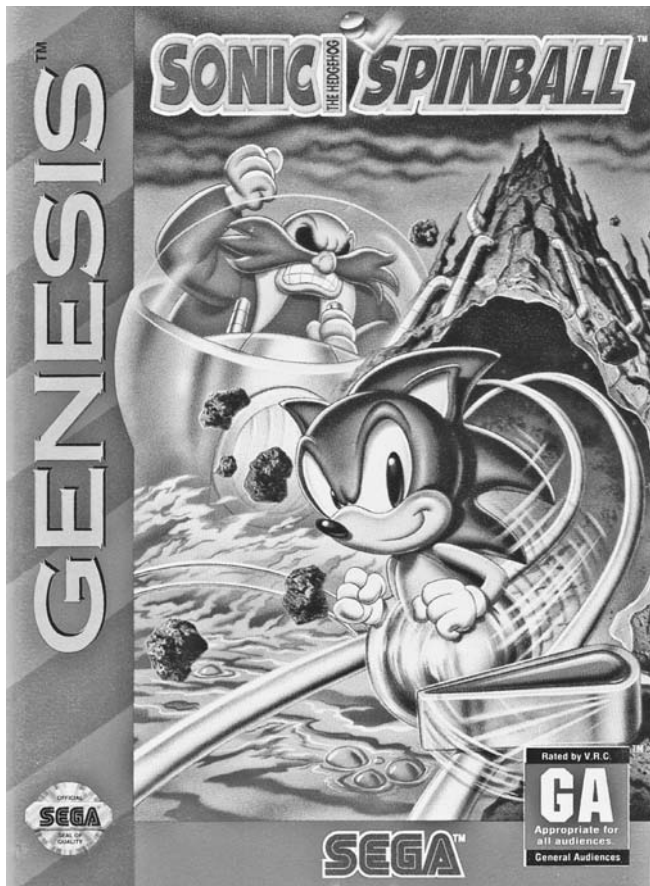
Fans of the side-scrolling *Sonic* series may be put off by *Sonic Spinball*, but video pinball buffs should thoroughly enjoy it. Sonic stands, walks, runs, and even rides a mine cart, but only sporadically, and only for a short while. He spends most of his time curled into a ball, bouncing off bumpers (and other targets), bouncing off enemies (destroying them in the process), going through tunnels, launching via springs, rising on steam jets, and getting battered around by the player's flippers. The game takes place in Dr. Robotnik's Veg-O-Fortress, which is essentially a giant, scrolling pinball machine consisting of four areas: The Toxic Caves, Lava Powerhouse, The Machine, and Showdown. There are bosses to battle, obstacles to avoid, exits to find, regular

pinball bonus rounds, and more. The game isn't as graphically impressive as the standard *Sonic the Hedgehog* games, but it looks better than any other video pinball game of its era. Released the same year as *Sonic the Hedgehog Arcade* (arcade), *Sonic CD* (Sega CD), and *Sonic Chaos* (GG).

Sonic the Hedgehog

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Donning red sneakers and a spiked hair-cut, Sonic the Hedgehog is a blue, attitudinal speedster who took Alex Kidd's place as Sega's mascot, helping make the company "cool" and far more popular in the process. Players guide the running, jumping, spinning dervish through six multi-stage zones (Green Hill, Marble,



Sonic Spinball takes the *Sonic the Hedgehog* series in an interesting direction: pinball.



The *Sonic the Hedgehog* series is at the top of most Genesis fans' list of must-own games.

Spring Yard, Labyrinth, Star Light, and Scrap Brain), speeding down twisting tunnels, hopping on enemies, leaping across lava pits, dodging spikes and burning rocks, bouncing off pin-ball-like bumpers, swimming through a water maze, and much more. Collecting rings lets players earn extra lives and warp to a Secret Zone rotating maze to earn chaos emeralds. In addition, as long as Sonic has at least one ring, he can take getting hit by an enemy or obstacle. Sonic can also pick up invincibility, extra lives, and power sneakers (for running even faster). His Super Sonic Spin Attack is a fun and effective way to battle Crabmeat, Moto Bug, Jaws, Caterkiller, and other robots created by the evil Dr. Robotnik. Replacing *Altered Beast* as the pack-in game with the Genesis system, *Sonic the Hedgehog* was a faster, edgier answer to Nintendo's *Super Mario Bros.* Also released for the GG, GBA, and SMS. Remade for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega/Sonic Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Sonic the Hedgehog inspired lots of imitators and sequels, including *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, which plays a lot like the original game, but introduces a new character: Tails the Fox, who tags along with Sonic, mimicking his moves and helping him grab coins and spin-attack enemies. In addition, Tails is playable in a special new split-screen, three-zone 2 Player VS mode, in which the characters compete to score the most points, clear each act in the fastest time, and gather the most rings and items. Sonic has a new move: the super dash attack, in which he "revs up like a turbo engine and dashes off in a blaze of speed." Zones for Sonic and Tails to run, jump, and spin their way through include: Emerald Hill, Chemical Plant, Aquatic Ruin, Casino Night, Hill Top, Mystic Cave, Oil Ocean, Metropolis, Sky Chase, and Wing Fortress. Each time they have 50 rings when they touch a star post, Sonic and Tails will get a chance at a chaos emerald by racing through tubes (viewed from behind), collecting coins, and dodging or jumping over bombs. Like its progenitor, *Sonic 2* is fast, fun, and beautifully designed. Also released for the Game Gear.

Sonic the Hedgehog 3

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sonic Team. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Bigger, better looking, and less linear than the first two games, *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* continues the greatness that is the *Sonic* series, but amps up the challenge. This time, gamers can play as Sonic or Tails (who can briefly fly) or as the two of them together. While controlling Sonic, gamers can grab the second controller to have Tails airlift Sonic out of danger or to access higher areas. Other new features include: battery backup for saving progress, an Insta-Shield super move, and a chaos emerald special stage where players, viewing Sonic from behind, run on a giant orb and dodge and grab energy spheres. In addition, there's a major new enemy called Knuckles the Echidna, plus such standard new enemies as Monkey Dude, Bugernaut, and Penguinator. Two-player split-screen action returns, as does the fast, highly entertaining gameplay. One-player levels include Angel Island, Hydrocity, Marble Garden, Carnival Night, IceCap Zone, and Launch Base. Two-player levels include Azure Lake, Balloon Park, Chrome Gadget, Desert Palace, and Endless Mine. Followed by: *Sonic & Knuckles*.

Sonic 3D Blast

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Traveller's Tales. Overhead View Action, 1 player. 1996.

The famed *Sonic the Hedgehog* series takes a radically different direction with *Sonic 3D Blast*, in which everyone's favorite sneakers-wearing blue hero runs and jumps around the following isometric perspective, pseudo-3D zones of Flicky Island: Green Grove, Rusty Ruin, Spring Stadium, Diamond Dust, Volcano Valley, Gene Gadget, and Panic Puppet. The goal in each stage is to find and collect all the captured Flicky birds and take them to dimension rings, all the while negotiating such enemies and obstacles as robots, lava beds, frozen paths, spike traps, and shock weapons. To collect a trapped Flicky held captive by a robot, players must spin dash or jump on said enemy. Knuckles and Tails are on hand to provide

rings and transport Sonic to a bonus stage. Instead of running from left to right at break-neck speeds like in previous games, Sonic moves slowly and deliberately in all directions, making for a fairly entertaining (if redundant) challenge. The floors all consist of a checker-board design, which gets old aesthetically, but is somewhat helpful in terms of visual perspective. Seasoned Sega fans know that the Flicky birds players rescue in *Sonic 3D Blast* are from *Flicky*, the underappreciated arcade and Genesis game. Also released for the Saturn. Released the same year as *Sonic Championship* (arcade) and *Sonic Blast* (GG).

Sorcerer's Kingdom

Publisher: Treco. Developer: Nippon Computer Systems. Third-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1992.

Viewed from overhead, *Sorcerer's Kingdom* puts players in the role of a young adventurer, doing the king's bidding by ridding the land of monsters and restoring peace. Typical RPG elements are in place, such as purchasing items, exploring dungeons, and talking to townsfolk to garner clues. However, the experience system has been replaced by an "analog growth system" in which the more players use a specific skill, such as magic or fighting, the more powerful that skill becomes. Also, the turn-based battles are rather unusual. When the player attacks or is attacked, the turn-based action immediately kicks into gear without moving to a separate screen, and players must battle all the onscreen enemies (one good strategy is to try and begin battles with only one enemy showing). Menu options during confrontations include fight, magic, item, move, parry, run, fireball, thunder, coldbolt, silence, blaze, freeze, fear, lightning, firestorm, icestorm, and spark.

Space Harrier II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

A system launch title, *Space Harrier II* is a console sequel to Sega's 1985 arcade game, *Space Harrier*. The game plays a whole lot like *Space Harrier*, but adds some new characters and bosses. The Genesis hardware can't hope

to recreate the stunning 3D visuals of the coin-op, but it looks pretty good for a launch title, despite pixilation and some rough scaling. Players view the action from behind the titular extraterrestrial warrior, who flies through the air and runs along the ground through 12 stages (including Felcold, Hell Peak, and Hot Palace), shooting (or avoiding) waves of creatures with such names as Crabbom, Evil Starfish, Cyborgman, and Demon Toad. There are also columns and totems to avoid and trees to burn down. The enemies appear in the distance and grow closer as the *Space Harrier* moves forward. There are also enemies that approach from behind. The checkerboard grounds (and sometimes skies) give the game a trippy look, but the shooting action is basic and repetitious (if mindlessly enjoyable). A definite step up from *Space Harrier* for the SMS, but not as cool as *Space Harrier 3-D* (also for the SMS). Followed by: *Planet Harriers* (arcade).



Space Harrier II is the Sega Genesis sequel to *Space Harrier*, the 1985 arcade classic.

Space Invaders '91

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Slide-and-Shoot, 1 player. 1991.

A sequel to Bally/Midway's *Space Invaders*, the groundbreaking arcade game from 1978, *Space Invaders '91* for the Genesis freshens up the slide-and-shoot formula pioneered by the original with faster gameplay, level progression, music (which is quite good), colorful backgrounds, weapon power-ups (bombs, lasers, a power beam, shields, and the like), crags to shoot, varied enemies, varied enemy formations, and more. Fans of the genre will enjoy *Space Invaders '91*, especially those looking for new, but somewhat familiar challenges. Released the year after *Super Space Invaders '91* (arcade). Followed by: *Space Invaders DC* (arcade), *Space Invaders '95* (arcade), *Super Space*

Invaders (GG), and various other games in the series.

Sparkster

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

The sequel to *Rocket Knight Adventures*, *Sparkster* is similar to its speedy predecessor, but with revamped graphics, sounds, and controls. Players guide an armor-clad, sword-swinging opossum through six levels (including deserts, forests, castles, and a flying airship), using a sword and Sparkster's trademark rocket pack attacks (blast, corkscrew spin, and buzzsaw) to battle lizard creatures and giant bosses. The pack now has two levels of power, the second of which lets Sparkster continue hovering. Gone is the *Gradius*-like level from

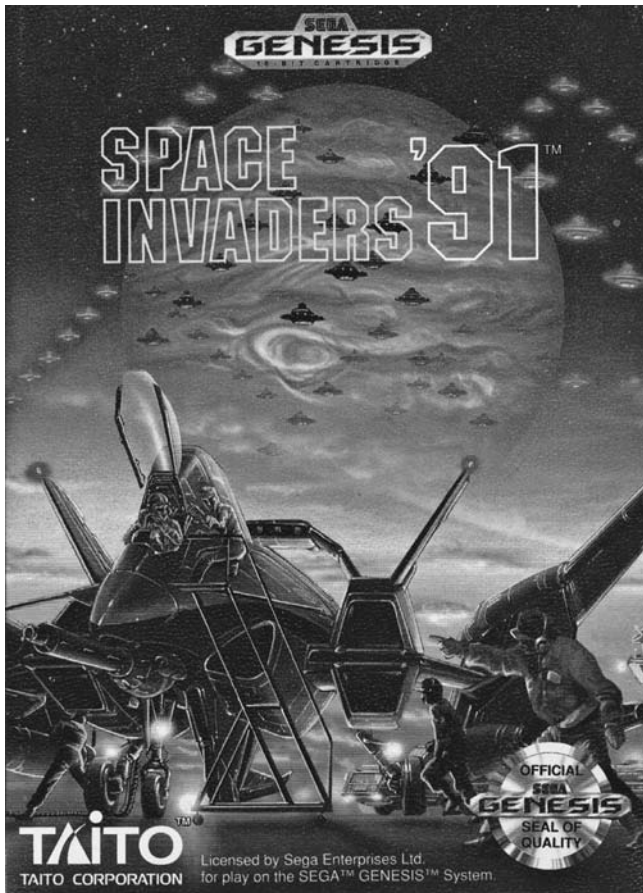
Rocket, but Sparkster once again battles Axel Gear as a robot. Also released for the SNES.

Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: The Bitmap Brothers. Sports/Futuristic, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A sequel to *Speedball*, which only appeared on home computers, *Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe* is viewed from overhead, with players maneuvering their armored, nine-man team around a scrolling court, trying to throw a small metal ball into the other player's goal. Passing among teammates is allowable, and there are fast, short-range throws and slow, long-range throws. As in many futuristic

games, rules of decorum are virtually nonexistent — players can injure opponents to score points and do slide-tackles to try and retrieve the ball. In addition to the hockey-style action (that is if you could throw the puck in hockey), *Speedball 2* lets gamers grab power-up tokens (including enemy freeze), throw the ball at targets, and earn money for use in replacing players or improving existing players' attributes (aggression, attack, defense, speed, stamina, throwing, power, and intelligence). Game modes include: Knockout, League, Cup, and Practice. Fast and fun, *Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe* was also released for the Game Boy (sans the "Brutal Deluxe" subtitle). Followed by: *Speedball 2100* (PSX).



Space Invaders '91 takes the slide-and-shoot formula established by *Space Invaders* (arcade, 1978) and adds exciting new features, including weapon power-ups and surprisingly good music.

Spider-Man (Acclaim)

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Western Technologies. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1994.

Based on the Fox Kids animated series that ran from 1994 to 1998, Acclaim's *Spider-Man* comes up lacking when compared to the Sega game of the same name, thanks in part to clunky controls and frustrating gameplay. Players guide the Webbed Wonder as he runs, jumps, crawls, crouches, climbs, and web-swings through five levels of play: The Lab at Empire State University, Coney Island, Downtown, Construction Zone, and Ravencroft. To battle Doctor Octopus, the Lizard, Green Goblin, Rhino, Venom, and various other Spidey villains (including a bevy of lesser thugs, robots, and the like), Spider-Man can punch, kick, fire web bolts, and throw grenades. Adding to the challenge are light puzzles (including switches to pull) and some non-linear elements. At certain points during the game Spidey can call on members of the

Fantastic Four to lend a helping hand. Also released for the SNES.

Spider-Man (Sega)

Publisher: Sega Entertainment. Developer: Technopop. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1991.

One of the better super-hero games of the era, *Spider-Man* puts players in control of Marvel Comics' famous web-slinger, battling bats, aliens, reptiles, thugs, and the like, along with such super-villains as Dr. Octopus, the Lizard, Electro, Sandman, Hobgoblin, and Venom. Spidey's job is to find and deactivate a bomb set by The Kingpin. To do this, Spider-Man is equipped with a variety of his comic book powers, including swinging on a web-line, sticking to ceilings and walls, and using spider-sense and web shielding. Ole Web-Head can also run, jump, punch, kick, climb, and squat. To recover his strength, Spidey can return to Peter Parker's apartment, which is a nice touch in an already fine game. The grating sound effects and music leave much to be desired, but the gameplay evokes the look and feel of the character and his surroundings pretty well. The Sega CD version, which is called *The Amazing Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin*, is upgraded with animated cut scenes, more color, and better music (including a song by Eric Martin of Mr. Big).

Spider-Man/Venom:

Maximum Carnage

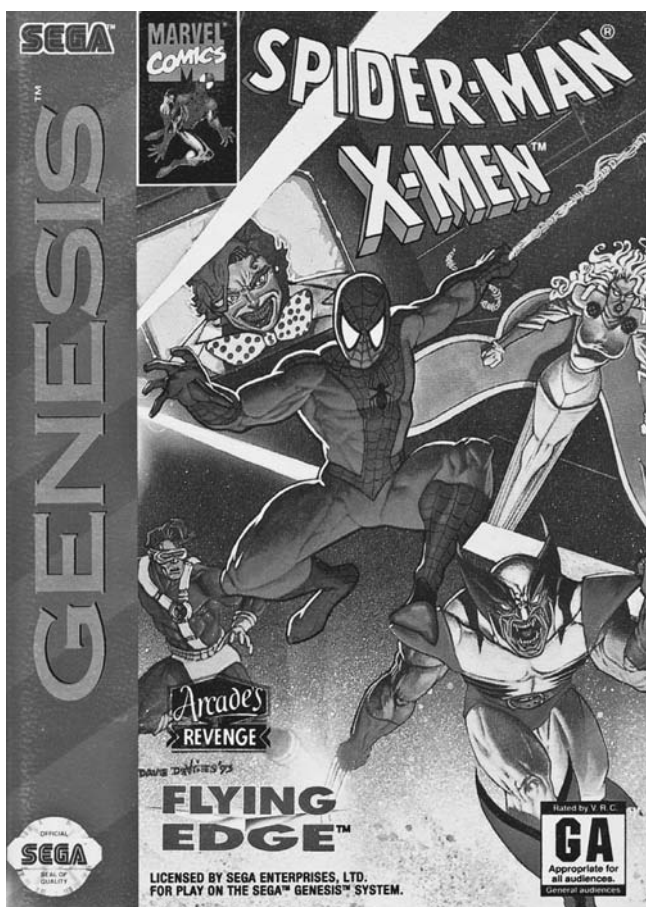
Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1994.

Like its near-identical SNES counterpart, *Maximum Carnage* for the Genesis is memorable for its red cartridge, rocking soundtrack by the band Green Jelly, and cut-scenes giving gamers an over-

view of the titular comic book story. Players guide a running, jumping, web-slinging Spider-Man (or Venom at times) through New York and San Francisco, using punches, kicks, and webbing to battle thugs and super-villains. By grabbing icons, players can call on Black Cat, Deathlok, Captain America, and other heroes to perform special attacks, such as hitting all on-screen enemies. Though playable (if repetitive) and nicely animated, the game desperately needs a save method. Based on Marvel's 14-part comic book crossover series from 1993. Followed by: *Venom/Spider-Man: Separation Anxiety*.

Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.



Play as Spider-Man, Wolverine, Cyclops, Storm, and Gambit in this Marvel Comics-based game.

Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge is virtually identical to the SNES game of the same name, but for one thing: the annoying buzzing sound from Spidey's spider sense has been removed. Players guide Spider-Man, Wolverine, Cyclops, Storm, and Gambit (one at a time) through Arcade's funhouse, battling supervillains (including Electro and Carnage) and such unconventional enemies as chess pieces, jack-in-the-boxes, and exploding clowns. Each of the characters has his or her own trademark powers, but swimming, mine cart action, and other such gameplay elements turn the superhero subgenre on its ear. *Arcade's Revenge* looks nice and is fairly entertaining, but it can be frustrating. For example, at one point in the Cyclops level a huge piece of ground can squash players flat with no warning.

Spiritual Warfare

Publisher: Wisdom Tree. Developer: Wisdom Tree. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1994.

Spiritual Warfare is disappointingly similar to the original NES version. It's not a bad *Legend of Zelda* clone, but it fails to utilize the superior processing power of the Genesis. On a mission to collect six pieces of the Armor of God (as well as answer Bible trivia), players must explore a town and convert unsaved souls using a variety of weapons and armaments, including throwable "fruits of the spirit," vials of the wrath of God (bombs), Sampson's jawbone (similar to the boomerang in *Zelda*), the belt of truth (similar to the ring in *Zelda*), and the sword of the spirit. Unlicensed.

Splatterhouse 2

Publisher: Namco. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

The sequel to *Splatterhouse* for the arcade and the TurboGrafx-16, *Splatterhouse 2* continues the monster mayhem of the original, but does so with better graphics. Rick, who buffs up when he wears a terror mask, must once again save his girlfriend, who is "trapped in a living nightmare." Armed with punches, kicks, flying kicks, and slide kicks, Rick walks along jumping over spikes, avoiding slime pits (and other

obstacles), and battling monsters, many of which squash apart leaking green blood when killed. To help destroy the various ghouls, giant leeches, wisps, sludge monsters, screaming skulls, razor fish, and other creatures, Rick can pick up and use the following weapons: lead pipes, bones, chainsaws, clippers, oars, shotguns, potassium bombs, ghoul heads, and spines. There are eight levels of play (including ruins, an elevator, a dark river, and spooky woods), each containing two or three stages. Fans of such films as *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street* will enjoy the schlocky chills and spills of this gorily gratuitous, genuinely entertaining game.

Splatterhouse 3

Publisher: Namco. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1993.

Splatterhouse 3 retains the gore and violence from previous games in the series, and there are still plenty of punches and kicks to go around, but the formula has been altered somewhat. Rick can now walk in a three-dimensional plane (as opposed to just left and right), and he can pull off a number of special moves, including head-butt, throw, throw backwards, throw down, and squad spin kick. These additions make the game similar in feel to such titles as *Final Fight*, *Double Dragon*, and *Streets of Rage*. In addition, levels are now nonlinear and timed (resulting in multiple game endings), and Rick can grab orbs to charge a power bar, which when full lets him mutate into a big, powerful creature with superior attacks, including choke, ab jab, and megaton driver. Weapons to pick up and use include boards, bats, knives, cleavers, and cinderblocks. There is no shotgun this time around, unfortunately, but the game remains a blast (so to speak). And, bolstered by 16 megs of power, it looks and sounds great. Followed by a *Splatterhouse* remake for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Sports Talk Baseball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Endorsed by the MLBPA, *Sports Talk Baseball* features more than 500 pro players

(including such stars as Kirby Puckett, Jose Canseco, and Will Clark) and robotic announcer speech throughout (which can be turned off). There are three generic stadiums to select from (domed, daytime, and nighttime), all the Major League teams (represented by city names, but not team names or logos), and three modes of play: Exhibition, All-Star Game, and Season (15, 30, 81, or 162 games and a pennant race). The fast, arcade-style action can be very high scoring, which makes it odd that the cartridge incorporates a 10-run rule that ends the game when either player has a 10-run lead. Otherwise, gameplay is solid, and it's impressive that the announcer uses more than 200 phrases. The view is from behind the batter, switching to an overhead perspective when the ball is hit into play. See also: *Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football*.

Spot Goes to Hollywood

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Developer: Eurocom Entertainment Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

The sequel to *Cool Spot*, this game stars the little round red dude from the 7Up TV commercials. Spot is trapped inside a movie projector, which somehow takes him through a variety of stages based on film genres, including adventure, pirate, horror, and science fiction. Spot will jump over fire, dodge spikes and cannon balls, avoid robots and sharks, ride a mine cart, climb stairs, swim under water, fly a space ship (during a *Zaxxon*-like side-scrolling shooter area), hop on bookshelves, benches, ledges, and other platforms, and shoot such enemies as skeletons, crabs, fire creatures, and walking missile launchers. *Spot Goes to Hollywood* is more of a traditional platformer than *Sonic 3D Blast*, but its isometric perspective makes it seem somewhat similar (it also makes jumps difficult to judge at times). To complete a stage, players must gather a certain percentage of red spots scattered around said stage. One of the better media licensed titles for the system, *Spot Goes to Hollywood* is a gorgeous and enjoyable game. The title character is very nicely animated, and he's fun to maneuver throughout the vertical and hori-

zontal areas. Also released for the PSX and Saturn.

Star Control

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Toys for Bob.

Space Combat Simulator/Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Emblazoned with Boris Vallejo box art, *Star Control* boasts 12 megabits of power (a first for a video game cartridge), five of which are dedicated to "interstellar" sounds. Players begin on any of 15 different scenarios, each starting on a rotating star map. Given three actions per turn, players explore new stars, fortify their defenses, colonize worlds, and much more. When two or more rival ships meet, arcade-like space battles ensue. There are 14 different *Star Trek*- and *Star Wars*-like starships to command, each with different weapons, powers, and maneuvering characteristics. Based on the 1990 computer game.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine — Crossroads of Time

Publisher: Playmates Interactive Entertainment. Developer: Novotrade. Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1995.

Crossroads of Time puts players in the role of *DS9* captain Benjamin Sisko, who must battle Cardassians and the Borg, explore Bajoran catacombs, disarm bombs, solve puzzles, jump on platforms, and much more. The (largely) side-scrolling action effectively replicates the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* television series (1993–1999), with gamers using phasers, hypospray, tricorders, Federation computers, and other trademark items. At times, players can interact with (and play as) Kira Nerys, Julian Bashir, Constable Odo, and other *DS9* characters. Sisko will even pilot a runabout through the narrow confines of the wormhole in this engaging (if awkward-to-control) adventure. Also released for the SNES.

Star Trek: The Next Generation — Echoes from the Past

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Space Combat Simulator/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

Echoes from the Past is similar to Spectrum HoloByte's *Star Trek: The Next Generation — "Future's Past"* for the SNES, but with some notable differences. Both games feature all seven senior officers (Picard, Riker, Data, La Forge, Worf, Crusher, and Troi), but *Echoes*, despite letting players warp away from potential space battles, is more action-oriented than the slower, more methodical "*Future's Past*," which encourages more exploration during away team missions (which do include puzzles). In *Echoes*, phaser energy is infinite, meaning the power packs from the SNES version are not needed. *Echoes* plays out more or less like a typical episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–1994), with players commanding the Enterprise, probing alien worlds and vessels, and

engaging in space battles with Romulans (including phaser and torpedo attacks).

Starflight

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Binary Systems. Space Combat Simulator/Strategy/Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1991.

Originally packaged with a 148-page instruction manual and a foldout map, *Starflight* for the Genesis is based on the 1986 computer classic, but has better graphics. The game mimics *Star Trek* to some degree as players must hire and train their crew (science officer, navigator, doctor, and the like), pilot a starship, drive a terrain vehicle on various planets, mine for minerals, search for artifacts, colonize planets, encounter monsters and aliens, and buy

and sell cargo pods, shields, phasers, photon torpedoes, and other items. Patient gamers not intimidated by the complexity of this epic saga will thoroughly enjoy themselves. The manual includes a short story by SF author Robert Silverberg.

StarGate

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Probe Entertainment. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1995.

Based on the 1994 feature film, *StarGate* puts players in the Kurt Russell role of Col. Jonathan "Jack" O'Neil, who runs, jumps, crouches, climbs, hangs, and enters doorways. O'Neil must work his way through 12 missions, including: The Desert (battle creatures, search for Daniel Jackson and his men); Shifting Sands (return to base camp); Base Camp (overcome Horus guards to consult with Jackson); Catcombs (explore dark, twisting caves with the help of commlink radio messages); Return to Nagada (support a resistance movement); and The Assault Begins (attack Ra in his pyramid). O'Neil is equipped



Starflight was originally packaged with an instruction manual that featured a short story by SF author Robert Silverberg.

with a machine gun with unlimited ammo and the ability to upgrade to rapid and wide fire. There are three different grades of ammo: good, better, and best. The gun can overheat, but O'Neil can grab gun coolant pickups. Extra lives and energy can also be picked up. Somewhat similar to *Super Star Wars* (SNES), but less linear and not as good. Also released for the SNES. Much different than the Game Boy and Game Gear puzzle games of the same name.

Steel Empire

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Hot-B. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Set during an alternative steampunk future consisting of the Liedengel Caverns, Lunar Space, and five other levels, *Steel Empire* offers two airborne vehicles for players to command: a speedy Striker plane, which fires armor-piercing missiles; and a cumbersome, heavily armored Z-01 Zeppelin, which launches aerial mines. Both ships can power up with speed, weapon strength, outrigger planes, and lightning bombs, and both are equipped with standard front and rear firing. Enemies are industrial strength, consisting of armored locomotives, floating fortresses, mammoth battleships, and the like. Despite the game's filmic atmosphere, the shooting action is fairly routine.

Steel Talons

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Polygames. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A port of Atari's 1991 arcade game, which was characterized by polygonal graphics, *Steel Talons* puts players at the helm of an Army attack chopper, shooting such enemy targets as jets, tanks, helicopters, trucks, gun turrets, bunkers, radar dishes, surface-to-air missiles, and enemy control towers. Viewed from behind, the chopper, which can move forward and backward, fly higher and lower, and bank and rotate right and left, is outfitted with missiles, rockets, and a 30mm chaincannon. To progress beyond any of the 12 missions, a certain number of targets must be destroyed

within a certain time limit. A tracking system does a nice job in helping players find their enemies. Settings include fog, box canyons, mountains, deserts, and prairies. Modes of play include Training, Combat, and Head-to-Head (against the computer). If a second gamer joins in, one player controls the altitude and rotating while the other flies and shoots. The game is playable (if tedious), but is a significant downgrade from the arcade original, especially in terms of visuals. Also released for the SNES.

StormLord

Publisher: Razorsoft. Developer: Punk Development. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

In *StormLord*, the evil Rotting Crone has captured and entombed the fairy princesses of the Enchanted Realm, prompting the titular hero, who is armed with magical throwing stars and blazing swords, to embark upon a perilous journey filled with dreaded draconian fire dogs, barbaric killer bees, mutated man-munching moss, and other fiendish foes. The action is fairly standard—jump on platforms, battle baddies—but players must backtrack and search for various items to complete levels. In the Mega Drive version of *StormLord*, the shapely fairies to be freed are topless. Adapted from the 1989 computer game.

Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition

Publisher: Capcom. Developer: Capcom. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Based on Capcom's arcade classic, *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* (1992), *Special Champion Edition* adds mirror matches, selectable game speeds, more fighting moves, and an exclusive "special" Group Battle Mode in which two players select up to six characters for Match Play or Elimination. The one-on-one fighting action lets gamers control one of 12 distinct fighters: Ken, Ryu, Blanka, Chun Li, Guile, Dhalsim, Honda, Zangeif, Vega, Balrog, Sagat, or M. Bison, each of whom has standard attacks (including light, medium, and hard punches and kicks) and special moves (such as fireball, hundred hand slap, claw dive, or spin-

ning pile driver). Thanks to the Genesis six-button controller (do NOT settle for three-button control), the game handles better than *Street Fighter II Turbo* for the SNES and even looks about as good. Voice effects are scratchy, but this is still a very impressive port of a great game. Followed by: *Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers* (Genesis, SNES).

Street Smart

Publisher: Treco. Developer: SNK. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Based on SNK's 1989 arcade game, *Street Smart* for the Genesis has fewer colors and a smaller playfield, but it does add some new flourishes, including gambling on fights and the ability to upgrade your fighter's life meter, power, and defense. Teaming up against the computer has been eliminated (as has the ambulance hauling off defeated fighters), leaving in its place a lame two-player mode in which gamers can only fight one another after defeating a stage boss. Playable characters include Karate Man (distinguished by an elbow blow, a roundhouse kick, and a Dragon's Tail Technique) and Crusher (noteworthy for his head-butting maneuver, front kick, and Kansas Tornado Kick), both of whom can pull off a lackluster assortment of punches, kicks, jumps, and back flips. The arcade version of *Street Smart* was released two years before the groundbreaking, genre-defining *Street Fighter II*, and this relatively faithful port of that largely forgettable game shows its age badly. Luckily, Genesis owners can avoid *Street Smart* in favor of *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition* and *Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers*.

Streets of Rage

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Streets of Rage is one of the most beloved and most referred to games in the Genesis library. Playing as either Adam Stone, Blaze Fielding (a female), or Axel Stone, each rated according to jumping, power, and speed, gamers unleash a surprisingly large array of

punches, kicks, slams, smashes, and throws on gangsters, ninjas, whip-wielding women, and other members of a secret criminal syndicate. Certain enemies wield bottles, knives, lead pipes, and baseball bats that can be knocked away and used by the player. In addition, boxes, vent shafts, garbage cans, and telephone booths hide weapons and such items as gold for extra points and energy-replenishing apples. In addition, players can pull off an incredibly cool special attack, which calls a cop car to the scene to rain down napalm (player one) or rocket-powered grenades (player two). In two-player mode, gamers can cooperate to pull off team tactic maneuvers. Areas to battle through in this fun, balanced, graphically detailed game include: City Street, Inner City, Beachfront, Bridge, Aboard Ship, Factory, Freight Elevator, and Syndicate Headquarters. Also released for the Game Gear.

Streets of Rage 2

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The best game in the series, *Streets of Rage 2* takes place a year after the original. Adam has been kidnapped, and it's up to Blaze, Axel, and newcomers Eddie "Skate" Hunter (Adam's brother) and Max Thunder (a professional wrestler) to rescue him (each player selects which character they want to control). Gameplay is similar to *Streets of Rage*, but even better, and the graphics have been upgraded as well. Playable characters have more individualized moves (jabs, chops, kicks, punches, slashes, dashes, tackles, slams, and the like), as do enemies (bikers, kickboxers, robots, and others), which are now named and have life gauges (all of them — not just bosses). The bottle, baseball bat, and pepper shaker from *Streets of Rage* are gone, replaced by a kunai and a katana. Special attacks, such as Max's thunder tackle and Skate's corkscrew kick, are more individualized and now drain energy (à la *Final Fight*). In addition, a two-player fighting mode (called Duel) has been added. Levels, which are longer than those of the first game, include: Downtown, Bridge Under Construction, Amusement Park, Stadium, The Ship,

Jungle, Munitions Plant, and Syndicate Stronghold. Also released for the Game Gear.

Streets of Rage 3

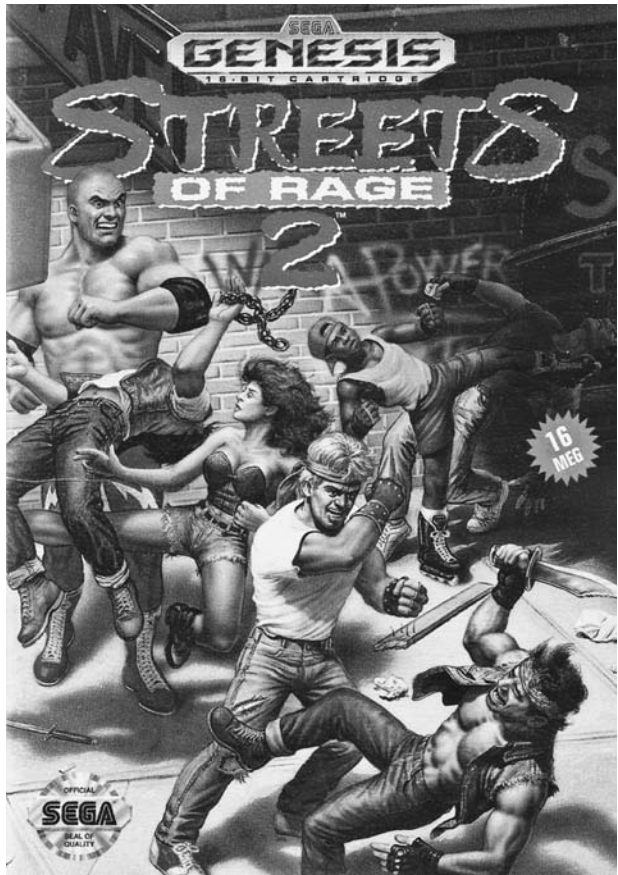
Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The third and final installment in the seminal beat-'em-up series, *Streets of Rage 3* introduces a number of new features to the franchise, including faster gameplay, a beefier plot (revolving around Mr. X and the Syndicate), smarter enemies (though the game is easier to beat than the first two), four different endings, cut scenes, larger character sprites, two-player combo attacks, hidden characters, and new jump kicks, power slams, spin punches, running moves, and other maneuvers. Players punch, kick, and use weapons to battle through seven levels comprised of such areas as the streets, a disco club, a bar, a warehouse, and a construction site. Unlike the previous two games, the weapons can only be used a set number of times. Playable characters include Axel Stone, Blaze Fielding, Eddie “Skate” Hunter, and cyborg newbie Dr. Zan, who turns any weapon he picks up into a ball of energy. *Streets of Rage 3* looks better than its predecessors, but all three are must-own titles for Genesis fans.

Strider

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

Boasting eight megabits of power (contributing to the game's original \$69.99 retail price), *Strider* is a remarkable port of Capcom's 1989 arcade game. Gone are the two-player alternating mode and voice effects, and the animation and backgrounds have been scaled back, but the hack-and-slash action remains intact. The agile, laser sword-wielding Strider Hiryu runs and jumps through five short (but intense) levels, battling winged robots, prehis-



Streets of Rage 2 is widely regarded as the best entry in the stellar, genre-defining trio of side-scrolling combat games.

toric monsters, and other anachronistic enemies. Strider is exceptionally athletic, giving him an assortment of attacks: squatting, running, jumping, sliding, hanging, and climbing. He's also equipped with a grappling hook for reaching higher areas. Levels in this intensely enjoyable game include: Kazafu, Siberia, Ballog (a massive flying fortress), The Amazon, and The Third Moon. Also released for the NES and SMS.

Strider Returns: Journey from Darkness

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex Design Studios. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Harder, slower, and less imaginative than the original *Strider*, *Journey from Darkness* challenges gamers to five timed, unreasonably difficult stages: The Forbidden Forest, The Cas-

tle Metropolis, The Hive, The Alien Depths, and The Master's Prison Ship. Strider Hino, who looks a lot like Strider Hiryu, dodges traps (such as slime pits and power generator charges) while using his slashing sword to battle robots, giant hornets, floating mines, alien hatchlings, and other enemies. This time around, Strider is also equipped with a limited number of projectile weapons in the form of shurikens. Unfortunately, this doesn't detract from the game's many weaknesses, which include downgraded graphics, bland level design, and poor collision detection. Also released for the Game Gear. Followed by: *Strider 2* (arcade, PSX).

Sub-Terrania

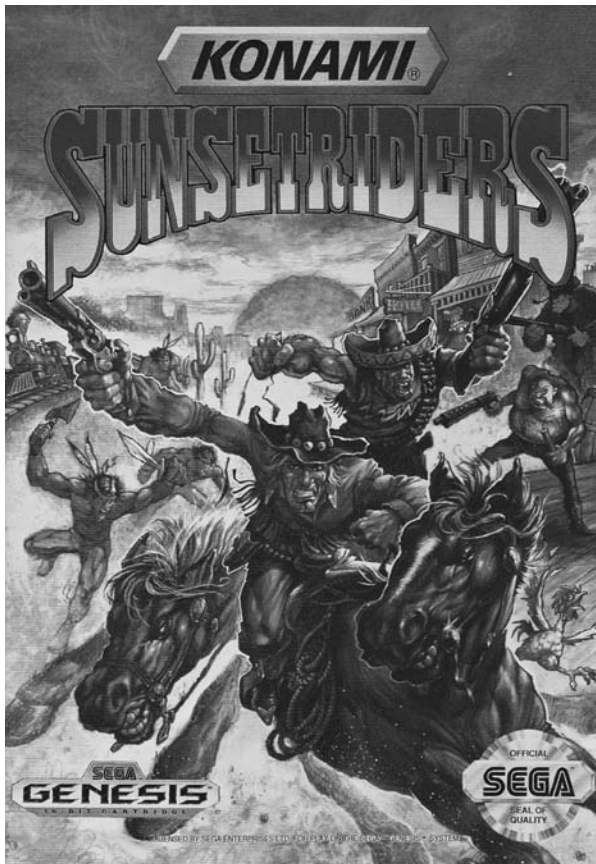
Publisher: Sega. Developer: Zyrinx. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

The fighter players pilot through the caves of *Sub-Terrania* handles (to some degree) like the ship in *Asteroids* (rotate, thrust, shoot), but is susceptible to gravity, meaning fans of *Lunar Lander*, *Gravitar*, and *Thrust* should take notice. Players rescue miners (à la *Choplifter*) and shoot aliens through 10 strategy-enhanced missions, being careful to frequently refuel. The gravity maintains a constant pull on the fighter, meaning crashing to the ground can be a problem. Though quite not as flashy as *Ranger X* (also by Zyrinx), *Sub-Terrania* looks good and has an excellent musical score (composed by Jesper Kyd).

Summer Challenge

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: MindSpan. Sports/Olympics, 1–10 players (alternating). 1993.

Released as *The Games: Summer Challenge* for home computers, *Summer Challenge* lets Genesis owners compete in eight Olympic-style events: Kayak (go through gates downstream); Archery (aim crosshair, fire arrows); 400 Meter Hurdles (set pace, jump when appropriate); High Jump (set bar height, button-mash to build speed, hold button to clear bar); Pole Vault (controls similar to High Jump); Equestrian (guide horse to best trajectory, time jumps just right); Javelin (build speed, initiate throw sequence, let go of javelin at correct angle); and Cycling (race laps, staying as close to inner edge as possible). As with *Winter Challenge*, the third-person view is from behind the competitor, supplemented by a window on the left side of the screen showing an overhead perspective. Modes of play include Training and Tournament. Other features include: digitized sound effects; VCR-style instant replays; and a memory chip for saving tournaments in progress and high scores.



Fans of the more well-known *Contra* and *Gunstar Heroes* should definitely take note of *Sunset Riders*, an awesome platform shooter set in the Old West.

Sunset Riders

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A *Contra*-style shooter set in the Old West, *Sunset Riders* is based on Konami's 1991 arcade game, but without the four-player simultaneous mode. Gamers select from two cowboys (four in the arcade and SNES versions): shotgun-shooting Corman and pistol-packing Bob, each of whom walks, jumps, slides, and rides a horse through eight frantically fun stages of bandits, bulls, bosses, and other baddies, picking up gold along the way. The action takes place in and around mountains, a gold mining town, Indian territory, the forest, a train, and other locales. Unlike the SNES port, voice effects are absent. A must-have for *Gunstar Heroes* fans.

Super Baseball 2020

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: NuFX. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Based on SNK's 1991 arcade/Neo Geo game, *Super Baseball 2020* is a futuristic take on America's pastime, with gamers selecting from 12 teams comprised of men, women, and robots. The players, which are huge and colorful, wear armor and can be upgraded in terms of batting and fielding abilities. In some respects, the game plays like a lot of other video baseball titles (nine innings per game, three strikes for an out, behind-the-batter view), but such differences as high jumps, hit batters taken off the field by an ambulance, and mines (called "crackers") in the outfield make the game extra entertaining. Other notable features include a homerun zone, diving catches, altered foul lines, player close-ups, celebratory pitchers, and home run animations. Also released for the Neo Geo CD and SNES.

Super Battleship

Publisher: Mindscape. Developer: Synergistic Software. Board Game/Turn-Based Strategy, 1 player. 1993.

This game features two modes of play: Classic Battleship, which is similar to Milton Bradley's famous board game; and Super Battleship, which expands the action with maneuverability around various waterways, multiple viewpoints, radar and sonar, ship repairs,

more weaponry (main guns, torpedoes, depth charges, and missiles), and mission-based gameplay (escort a merchant vessel to a safe harbor, rescue a soldier, raid an airfield, and hunt down and destroy enemy supply ships, among 12 other missions). There are three categories of vessels: neutral, enemy (submarine, shore batteries, and mines), and friendly (patrol boat, destroyer, escort, battleship, light cruiser, heavy cruiser, and battle cruiser). Surprisingly (and disappointingly), the turn-based gameplay lacks a two-player mode. Also released for the SNES.

Super Battletank: War in the Gulf

Publisher: Absolute Entertainment. Developer: Imagineering. First-Person Tank Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Designed by Garry Kitchen and Alex DeMeo, *Super Battletank: War in the Gulf* is the sequel to *Battletank* for the NES. Players guide an armored M1A1 battletank through 10 missions, battling such enemies as SCUD launchers, Mi-24 HIND helicopters, and T-62 tanks while destroying such targets as bunkers, ammo dumps, chemical weapons facilities, and oil refineries. The tank is equipped with machine guns, smoke grenades, and armor-piercing shells, the latter controlled by a laser-range finder. The view of the action is from inside the tank. The top half of the playfield shows a trio of view screens while the lower half displays gun angle, range of enemy, enemy targets remaining, speedometer, fuel gauge, weapons status indicator, shots remaining, damage indicator, mapping system, and message center (relaying such crucial information as equipment status and communications from headquarters). Players should be careful to avoid driving over mines. In addition, fuel and armaments must occasionally be replenished, and the tank must go in for repairs from time to time. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES. Followed by: *Super Battletank 2* (SNES).

Super Hang-On

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Motorcycle Racing, 1 player. 1989.

A fun and challenging, yet simple game, *Super Hang-On* is essentially *Pole Position* on a motorcycle, sans qualifying rounds, but with a turbo button for accelerating past the standard high speed. Viewing the bike from behind the action, players race from checkpoint to checkpoint down twisting, turning roads in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe, passing other motorcycles and trying not to crash into such roadside hazards as trees and billboards. Arcade mode mimics Sega's 1987 coin-op game (with the expected audio/visual and controller downgrades), but the Genesis-exclusive Original mode adds a number of fresh features, including money from winning races, damage from crashing the bike, worn out parts to replace, a mechanic to hire (affecting part longevity and reliability of advice), and upgrades for the bike's muffler, frame, engine, oil, brakes, and tires. Four background musical tracks are available: *Outride a Crisis*, *Sprinter*, *Winning Run*, and *Hard Road*. *Super Hang-On* is the sequel to *Hang On* (arcade, 1985), which appeared on the Master System via *Hang On & Astro Warrior* and *Hang On & Safari Hunt*. A system launch title.

Super High Impact

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on Midway's 1991 arcade game, *Super High Impact* is indeed an arcade-style football game, as emphasized the following: button-mashing brawls (yes, the players on the field get in to fights); amusing voice effects (exclaiming "Oh, my knee!" and the like); humorous animations (including celebrations, frustrations, and flying helmets); and bone-crunching tackles (an announcer rates tackles from "granny" to "awesome" on a Hit-O-Meter). The game lacks such staples as substitutions, statistics, and seasonal play, but there are grass and turf fields, three difficulty levels, adjustable quarter lengths, and three modes of play (versus the computer, versus player two, and two players against the computer). When the quarterback drops back to pass, the computer picks the open receiver, and the power

of kicks is determined by tapping a button rapidly, further evidence of the game's simple, arcade-like action (which scrolls horizontally). While not in league with the *Madden* series or *Tecmo Super Bowl*, *Super High Impact* is good for a few laughs, especially in two-player mode. Also released for the SNES.

Super Hydlide

Publisher: Seismic. Developer: T&E Soft. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1990.

The sequel to *Hydlide* (NES), *Super Hydlide* improves upon the original, from the music to the gameplay to the graphics (which are still plagued by small sprites and limited animation, but offer more detailed forests and such). Once again, Fairyland is beset by evil, and the player must set things right by exploring overworlds and dungeons, killing monsters, and leveling up. However, this time the hero gets hungry and tired and must rest and eat. In addition, there are now four character classes (fighter, thief, priest, and monk) and a weight system, the latter limiting how many items the player can carry. Followed by: *Virtual Hydlide* (Saturn).

Super Monaco GP

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

An excellent port of Sega's 1989 arcade game (one version of which was a sit-down, force-feedback unit housed in a racecar cabinet), *Super Monaco GP* for the Genesis offers nice visuals (including themed backgrounds), excellent presentation (complete with bathing suit beauty), 16 different courses (each set in a specific country), two selectable cars (four-speed and seven-speed), and a pithy, lengthy feature not found in the coin-op classic: World Championship mode. (The lousy SMS version lacked World Championship mode, but did offer two-player split-screen action). The game's fun, finely tuned, *Pole Position*-style racing made *Super Monaco GP* a favorite among early Genesis owners. Followed by: *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP II*.

Super Off Road

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Tradewest.
Rally/Off Road Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Although it's not quite as sharp graphically as Leland's original 1989 arcade game (*Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road*), *Super Off Road* for the Genesis does include the bikini babes that are absent on the better looking Super NES rendition (where the girls wear standard clothing). The overhead view action is similar to *Super Sprint*, but enhanced by vehicle upgrades and played on dirt tracks that are littered with such obstacles as hills, puddles, and pits. Players race their truck against three other drivers, but the three-player mode from the coin-op classic and the four-player mode

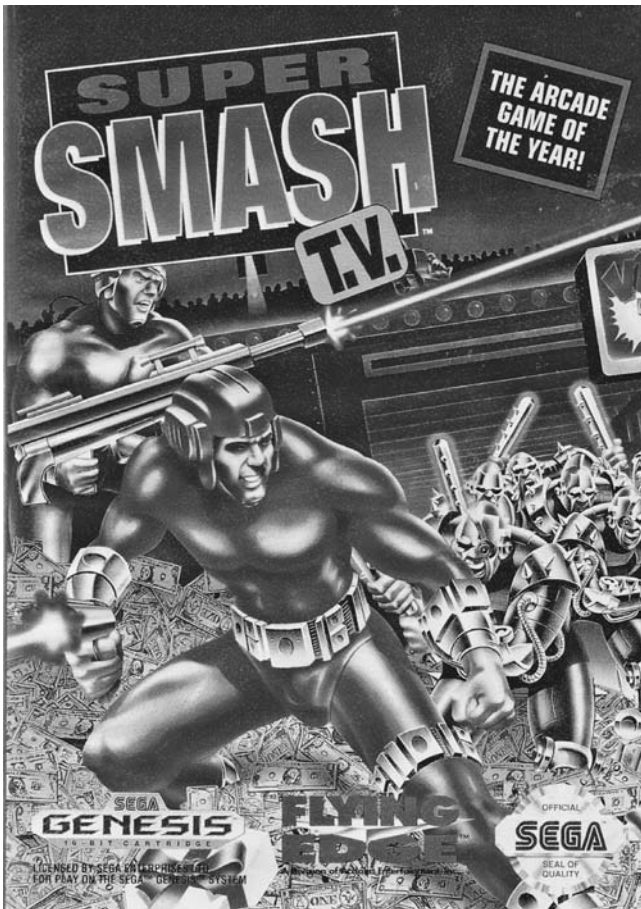
from the NES version are missing. Also released for the GB, GG, and Lynx.

Super Smash T.V.

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Probe Software. Non-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Despite scratchy voice effects and a few minor missing elements (such as the game show host appearing via pop-up with two large-breasted women), *Super Smash T.V.* is a nice port of the 1990 Williams arcade game, *Smash T.V.*, which is a scathing piece of sociological science fiction where viewers demand more violence on television. Players, as game show contestants (à la Stephen King's *The Running Man*), must run around a series of non-

scrolling, overhead-view arenas, firing a near-constant stream of machine gun bullets in all directions at mutant cyborgs, club-wielding mechanoids, and tactical assault tanks. Items to pick up include gold, smart bombs, a multi-directional photon gun, speed boosts, missile launchers, and more. The hectic action evokes *Robotron: 2084*, which is understandable since Eugene Jarvis designed both games. Similar to Atari 5200 *Robotron: 2084*, *Super Smash T.V.* lets players wield two controllers to "move in one direction and shoot in the same (or any other) direction at the same time." Unfortunately, the control pads are awkward to use in this fashion compared to the 5200 joysticks, which benefitted from a special controller holder (that was packaged with *Robotron*). Also released for the SNES, GG, and NES, the latter without "Super" in the title.



Super Smash T.V. is the Genesis port of *Smash T.V.*, which Williams released to the arcades in 1990.

Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers

Publisher: Capcom. Developer: Capcom. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The follow-up to *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition*, *Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers* is an excellent port of the 1993 Capcom arcade game of the same name (despite distinct musical downgrades). The game plays a lot like *Special Champion Edition*, but with smarter opponents, better character graphics, and the addition of four new fighters: jeet kundo expert Fei Long (rekka ken, rising dragon kick); scantily clad British Special Forces agent Cammy (front kick, cannon drill, spinning knuckle); Native American wrestler Thunder Hawk (the hawk, thunderstrike, the storm hammer); and Jamaican kick boxer Dee Jay (hyper fist, max out, and double dread kick). Modes of play include: Super Battle, Versus Battle, Group Battle, Time Challenge, and Score Challenge. Followed by: *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* (arcade, 3DO), *Street Fighter IV* (PS3, Xbox 360), and other sequels.

Super Thunder Blade

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person 3D Shooter/Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

The sequel to *Thunder Blade* (arcade, SMS), *Super Thunder Blade* puts players at the helm of the titular ASH-091B chopper, firing cannons, missiles, and a 20mm Gatling gun. Each of the game's four stages—a city, caverns, a naval base, and a nuclear power plant—is divided into two sections, neither of which is very good. The first half of each stage is viewed from behind the helicopter, with players dodging enemy fire that scales slightly larger as it approaches the screen. Unfortunately, the enemies and their firepower are frequently obscured by the player's chopper. The second half provides a top-down perspective, with the chopper maneuvering right and left along the bottom of the playfield while the action moves forward. The restricted left-and-right movement of the helicopter limits the action and fun factor to a large degree, making these portions pale in comparison to most vertical scrolling shooters. The chopper fires a 20mm Gatling gun, along with cannons and missiles. Enemies include jet fighters, aircraft carriers, space aircraft, warships, attack aircraft equipped with Gatling guns, battle tanks equipped with anti-

aircraft rockets, and 25-foot mechanical armor piloted by soldiers riding in their cockpits. Sluggish and choppy, *Super Thunder Blade* is a below-average game, but it does have a nice overall look and a rocking soundtrack.

Super Volleyball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Video System. Sports/Volleyball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The only volleyball game to appear on the Genesis, *Super Volleyball* lets players select from eight international squads. Or, gamers can create their own team according to jersey numbers (1–15), player names, uniform colors (16 in all), and player attributes (speed, block, return, and serve). There are four starters on each team (as opposed to six in real volleyball), plus two substitutes. The game features an unusually low side-view of the action, and the computer has a tendency to bunch up the three non-serving players in a little grouping near the net. Solo action consists of single games or World League competition, the latter of which pits players against the aforementioned international teams. Prior to starting a game, players can toggle beginning points, handicapping, and ball speed (normal, slow, or fast). *Super Volleyball*, which is misspelled “Super Volley ball” on the title screen, was also released for the TurboGrafx-16. It is a fairly accurate port of V-System's mediocre arcade game (1989).

Superman

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Sunsoft. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

Superman, the patron saint of superheroes, would seem to be the perfect subject for a video game, especially considering his vaunted powers. Unfortunately, most games starring the Metropolis Marvel stink on ice (*Superman* for the Atari 2600 and *The Death and Return of Superman* for the Genesis and SNES are notable exceptions). *Superman* for the Genesis isn't terrible, but the combat action is highly pedestrian. Superman walks, jumps, avoids obstacles (such as laser beams and enemy fire), and uses a simple punching maneuver on flying ships, automated security

systems, fast-moving bad guys, and other enemies. Despite having rechargeable sonic punches and the ability to spin through the ground, Superman seems emasculated here, and the game could use more save points, health re-fills, and/or continues to stave off frustration. In addition to simple combat, horizontal and vertical flying stages in which Superman shoots heat vision at enemies are included. This amps up the action somewhat, but the game nevertheless fails to evoke the power and majesty of the Man of Steel. Includes appearances by Brainiac, Lois Lane, The Prankster, Metallo, and Mr. Myxztlk.

Sword of Sodan

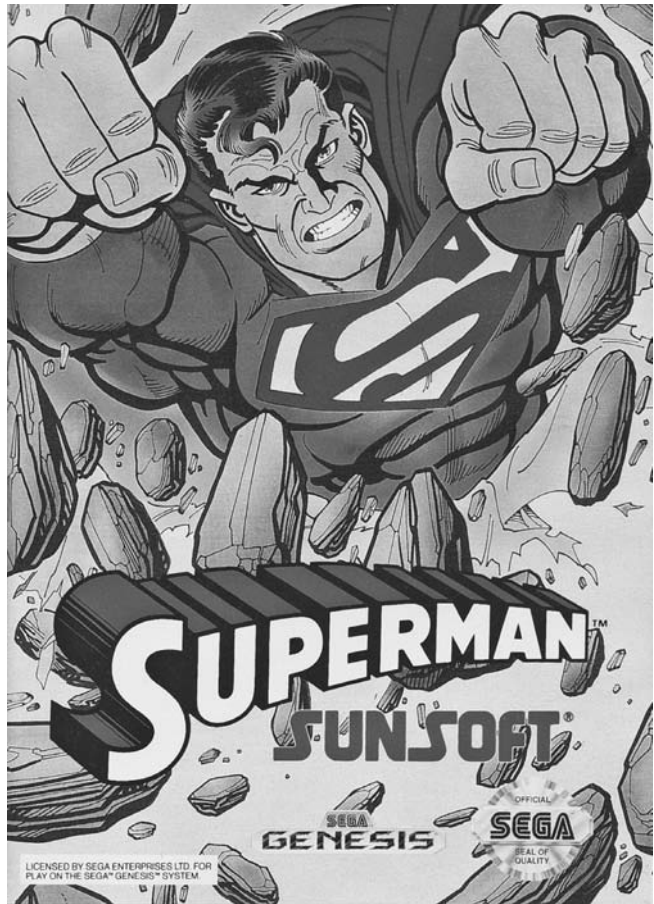
Publisher: Electronic Arts.

Developer: Innerprise Software.

Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player.

1990.

Set in such areas as a castle and a forest, *Sword of Sodan* has players guiding a male (faster with more health) or female (stronger with longer sword) barbarian through seven short levels of hack-and-slash action, battling a small variety enemies that attack from the right and the left, including demons, axemen, giants, and zombies. There are also pits, spikes, and other obstacles to avoid. The characters are huge, but gameplay is monotonous and poorly controlled. Both the male and the female move slowly and can do long and short jumps. In addition, they use four dull, dreary attack methods: cut, thrust, low thrust, and chop. Potions let players increase their hit strength, damage onscreen enemies, and restore stamina, and they can be combined with other potions for extra lives, damage increase, shields, and level skipping. In-game music is nonexistent, but the digitized sound effects are solid. Also noteworthy is the game's graphic violence and high blood content. *Sword of Sodan* is a port of the 1989



While not fully exploiting the potential of DC's greatest hero, *Superman* for the Genesis is far superior to such super misfires as *Superman* for the NES and *Superman* for the Nintendo 64.

computer game, but with four fewer levels and five fewer enemy types.

Sword of Vermilion

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1990.

In *Sword of Vermilion*, players take on the role of a warrior prince on a quest to find eight Rings of Good and battle King Tsarkon, holder of the eight Rings of Evil. The prince can enter shops to purchase a variety of different swords, armor, shields, and magic (bolts of lightning, fireballs, earthquakes, jets of water, and the like) for use in real-time battles with such creatures as skeletons, bats, eyeballs, snakes, and a giant dragon boss. Other purchasable items

include medicine, lanterns, alarm clocks, bombs, a joke book, and more. As with many RPGs, there are caves to explore, people to talk to, and treasures to find. Originally packaged with a 106-page strategy guide. Somewhat similar to: *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* (NES).

Syd of Valis

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Telenet Japan. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Like the original *Valis*, which is a Genesis adaptation of a Japanese computer game, *Syd of Valis* stars Yuko Ahso, but this time she's a grammar school student illustrated in a super-deformed style, complete with big head and bulging eyes. Equipped with bombs and a sword that fires projectiles, Yuko (called Syd during the game) must run, jump, and shoot her way through five levels: Reality, Dream World, Castle Vanity, Megas' Territory, and Castle Megas. Various pick-ups enable Yuko to collect selectable costumes that give her varying degrees of speed, defense, and attack power. In addition, she can use upgradable straight, wide, tracer, and three-way beam weapons. *Syd Valis*, known as *SD Valis* in Japan ("SD" stands for super deformed), is a re-imagining of *Valis II*, which is a TurboGrafx-CD adaptation of a Japanese computer game. Followed by: *Super Valis IV* (SNES). See also: *Valis III* (Genesis).

Sylvester and Tweety in Cagey Capers

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Alexandria. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

In what is essentially an interactive Warner Bros. cartoon, Sylvester chases Tweety through seven levels of colorful, funny, beautifully animated action, trying to scratch the bird. And, surprise, surprise, Sylvester can actually catch Tweety (at the end of each level). Sylvester is clumsier than a real cat, but the game remains a pleasure as he navigates back alleys, cruises aboard an ocean liner, traverses Granny's back yard (watch out for Granny and her broom), rides atop a freight train (beware of freight doors), and makes his way through a science lab (where Tweety Bird can turn into Tweety

Monster). In addition to avoiding falls, dog bites, alley cats, punches, electricity, and other obstacles, Sylvester must solve numerous puzzles, such as moving crates to reach higher platforms and using a bone to distract Spike. Sylvester also walks on telephone wires, rides a pogo stick, hops on moving platforms, hides behind lamps or in barrels, and much more.

Syndicate

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Bullfrog Productions. Action Strategy, 1 player. 1994.

An intriguing mix of strategy and open-ended action, *Syndicate* is based on the 1993 cyberpunk computer game, which benefited from keyboard controls and better graphics and sounds (though the Genesis game is still impressive in scope). The year is 2096, and the world has been divided into 50 territories controlled by a few corrupt corporations. As an executive of one of these corporations, you must take control of all the territories, meaning the game has 50 infiltrate-and-capture and seek-and-destroy missions. After selecting up to four cyborg agents and equipping them with weaponry (pistols, shotguns, and a special Persuadertron, which forces enemies to join your team), you will: shoot guards and police droids; take weaponry from fallen enemies; sell unwanted equipment; raise taxes; purchase weapons, upgrades, and equipment; drive around in vehicles; and more. The strategic altering of the adrenaline, intelligence, and perception of your cyborgs plays a key role in certain situations. The futuristic action is viewed from a $\frac{3}{4}$ overhead perspective. Also released for the SNES, Jaguar, and 3DO. Followed by: *Syndicate Wars* (PlayStation).

T2: The Arcade Game

Publisher: Arena Entertainment. Developer: Probe Software. Light Gun Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Inspired by James Cameron's *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), *T2: The Arcade Game* puts players in the Arnold Schwarzenegger role of a T-800 Terminator, sent back through time to protect future Resistance leader John Connor. This entails guiding a targeting sight

around side-scrolling and static playfields, shooting orbs, swat teams, ground hunter-killers, aerial hunter-killers, T-800 endoskeletons, and T-1000 advanced prototypes. Levels include: The Battlefield; The Human Hideout; Trip to Skynet (protect John in his truck); Skynet; Cyberdyne Systems (destroy the place); The Freeway (escape T-1000's helicopter attack); and The Steel Mill (blast open a tanker). Players are given unlimited machine gun fire and can pick up such weaponry as smart bombs, rockets, shotgun shells, a mini-gun, and an M-79 grenade launcher. The action is intense, and it's a good idea to have a second player join in to even the odds. The game has fewer voice effects than its 1991 coin-op counterpart (Midway's *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*), but it's a good port with nice (if somewhat downgraded) graphics. Compatible with Sega's Menacer light gun. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES.

TaleSpin

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A mediocre take on the Disney cartoon series, *TaleSpin* has Baloo and Kit working for Higher for Hire, an airplane delivery service. Their objective is to fly to eight different locations (including Egypt, India, and New York), picking up 10 cargo boxes found within each area. Gamers can play as Baloo, who fires a paddle ball, or Kit, who wields a slingshot (for shooting dogs, crabs, snakes, spiders, and other enemies). Both characters run, swim, jump on platforms and over obstacles, stack boxes to reach otherwise inaccessible areas, and more. In two-player mode, Kit can ride on Baloo's shoulders. Power-ups to grab include enemy freeze, invincibility, three-way fire, and the like. During the airborne areas,

Baloo pilots a Sea Duck while Kit flies an airfoil. In the one-player mode, the airfoil Kit rides is actually guided by the computer, which tends to run directly into enemies, meaning Baloo is the better character to control. Two decidedly different takes on *TaleSpin* were also released: an NES cart, which lacks platforming, and a TurboGrafx game, which has a different storyline and different levels and weapons.

Target Earth

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: NCS/Masaya. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

In *Target Earth*, you are Chron, Commander of the Earth Defense League. To ward off an invasion of cyborgs, you must don an Assault Suit, which is a 12-foot-tall battle mech



Not to be confused with the 1954 B-movie classic of the same name, *Target Earth* for the Genesis puts players in control of a battle mech.

equipped with grenade launchers, armor, homing missiles, a b-pack (providing temporary flight), and 13 other weapons. In addition to blowing away scores of enemies through eight lengthy, good looking stages (some of which are several screens tall), you must guard space shuttles, destroy enemy bases, and perform other such missions. *Target Earth* is brutally difficult (and a bit slow), but the mech's energy does replenish itself at a steady pace.

Task Force Harrier EX

Publisher: Treco. Developer: Treco. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Inspired by UPL's obscure *Task Force Harrier* arcade game (1989), *Task Force Harrier EX* for the Genesis has flatter visuals and is missing a few sound effects, including certain digitized voice samples. However, it does add some welcome features, including between-level intermissions, flash bombs, and wingmen (called "phantom escorts") that can be adjusted on the fly in four different positions (as opposed to the stationary wingmen from the arcade game). Speed power-ups are absent, but adjusting the wingmen also adjusts the speed of the player's plane, which is equipped with machine guns and three types of bombs, all of which can be powered up. The shooting action is fast and non-stop as players fly over 13 stages of oceans, cities, deserts, and frozen tundra, blowing away battleships, bunkers, choppers, gunships, and other enemies.

Taz in Escape from Mars

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Headgames. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Taz does indeed escape from Mars in this game after he beats the first boss, but he then must escape from Moleworld, Planet X, Mexico (oddly enough), The Haunted Castle, and Marvin the Martian's House. Players guide Tasmanian Devil as he runs and jumps through the cartoonish worlds, spin-attacking such enemies as robots, monsters, killer bees, aliens, a giant elephant, and molemen. Taz also breaks through walls, spins up shafts and around loop-de-loops, drills underground, rides whirlycopters, and throws switches and levers

to open and shut doors and to operate machinery. To help his cause, the ever ravenous Taz can gobble gasoline (hot breath blasts), rocks (projectile weaponry), bubbling beakers (to turn large or small), and food (health). Bombs, however, should be avoided. Excellent, cartoonlike graphics help make the game seem fun at first, but players will quickly grow tired of a serious design flaw. Spinning at high speeds makes Taz frequently run into spikes and other obstacles, causing cheap hits and unnecessary frustration. With a few tweaks here and there, this could have been a great platformer.

Taz-Mania

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Taz-Mania looks a lot like the 1991 animated series on which it is based, but it's plagued by blind jumps leading to unfair deaths. Taz runs through 17 levels (including deserts, jungles, factories, and frozen landscapes), spinning into, jumping on, and throwing items at octopi, Bush Rats, Francis X. Bushlad, Bull Gator, and other enemies. Eating chili peppers lets Taz breath fire. In addition to vanquishing enemies (which are far from plentiful), Taz must deal with quicksand, cliffs, elevators, a mine cart level, and more. Completely different than the SNES game of the same name.

Team USA Basketball

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, in which the U.S. made eligible their NBA superstars (recent losses had prompted the move), *Team USA Basketball* features the fabled Dream Team, which includes such legends as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Charles Barkley, Patrick Ewing, David Robinson, John Stockton, and Karl Malone. The game uses the same engine as *Lakers versus Celtics and the NBA Playoffs* (and other games in the *NBA Playoffs* series), but national rules are in place, and the production values are more elaborate, featuring each country's national anthem (14

countries and 168 players are represented) and sprite-based “snapshots” of local monuments and natural landmarks. Gameplay is a bit on the slow side, but many of the players are recognizable, 23 of the players have signature moves, and the elevated side-view, five-on-five action rarely feels overly crowded. Game and season stats are icing on the cake.

TechnoClash

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Zono Company. Overhead View Action/Adventure, 1 player. 1993.

A top-down scrolling action/adventure game, *TechnoClash* puts players in the role of Ronaan, Wizard Prince of the Inner Realm. Joined by computer-controlled bodyguards Chazz the fire wizard and Faarg the commando, players journey through seven levels: Las Vegas Casino, The Junkyard, The Desert, The Underground City, Portal Cavern, Tween Place, and Teg Temple. The goal is to defend a magical world from a technological invasion unleashed by the Robot Lord. Each level has specific objectives, such as locating card keys, shooting (or otherwise killing) all the enemies, destroying robot generators, and/or turning off barriers. There are nine combat weapons and spells available (including time bombs, lightning bolts, and fire globes), plus four non-combat spells: healing, teleportation, levitation, and invulnerability. Indar, the Hawk of Second Sight, provides a magical bird’s eye view of the entirety of each battlefield. The action moves rather slowly, but rich, detailed graphics and fun, tactics-enhanced gameplay help make *TechnoClash* an engagingly original part of the Genesis library.

Technocop

Publisher: Razorsoft. Developer: Razorsoft. Platform Shooter/Combat Racing, 1 player. 1990.

Notable for its use of extreme violence, seedy locations, and even seedier characters, *Technocop* has players driving a red, upgradeable (with a nuclear missile launcher and other weapons) sports car that comes equipped with a side-mounted gun for blowing other vehicles

off the road. Once the player reaches his or her destination building (within the time limit, preferably) and goes inside, the game switches to third-person shooting action, with players firing at enemies (with a handgun or a net gun) and searching for the level boss. When a bad guy takes a bullet, he explodes into gruesome pieces. *Technocop* presaged such titles as *Grand Theft Auto III* and *The Getaway*, but, unfortunately, it’s hampered by poor controls, bad sound, and mediocre graphics.

Tecmo Super Baseball

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The follow-up to *Tecmo Baseball* (NES), *Tecmo Super Baseball* lives up to its title, thanks to fun gameplay, smart computer A.I., good controls, and a deep Season mode that lets gamers play, simulate, coach, or simply watch each game. Other modes include Preseason and Super Stars, the latter of which is the unlicensed name for a Major League All-Star game. There are 28 teams, each denoted by city name, and there are 700 real MLBPA players, each with stats and ratings based on the 1993 season. Unlike the SNES version, which employs Mode 7 scaling for fielding, the Genesis game uses the more typical $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective. The batting view is from behind the catcher. Other features include: double steals; hit and runs; infield and outfield shifts; four types of pitches; four types of swings (normal, power, contact, and bunt); intentional walks; pitch-outs; battery backup for saving seasonal stats and progress; and more. On a less positive note, there are no trades, and there’s only one stadium.

Tecmo Super Bowl

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

First released on the NES, which was also home to the legendary *Tecmo Bowl*, *Tecmo Super Bowl* is arcade-style football with enough simulation features to please discriminating armchair athletes. NFL and NFLPA licensing allows for 28 teams, each with different strengths and weakness, and each comprised of real players. There are four running plays and four

passing plays, but gamers can customize the playbook. Primary modes of play include: Pre-season, Season, and Pro Bowl. Other options and features include: injuries, worn out players, substitutions, Coach mode, weather conditions (rain and snow), sacks, fumbles, dives (which are executed automatically), a three-year option (seasons 1991–1993), touchbacks, touchdown celebrations, battery backup for saving stats and standings, and more. Controls are simple (which is good for the most part, but you can't switch defenders once the ball is in play), and the overhead-view action scrolls horizontally. Also released for the SNES and PSX.

Tecmo Super Bowl II: Special Edition

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Tecmo Super Bowl II: Special Edition was released in relatively small quantities (the game sold out across the country, prompting Tecmo to release a statement that *Tecmo Super Bowl III* would be released “soon”), making it one of the pricier sports titles of the era in today's collector's market. A number of additions to the series were made, including: audibles, trades, larger players, new player animations, new cut scenes, fake punts and field goals, a dive button (as opposed to automatic diving), two-point conversions, the ability to change defensive formations, scheduling based on the player's previous record, and double the number of offensive plays (thanks to two playbooks). The action still scrolls horizontally, but the view is angled for a somewhat better look at the field. Also released for the SNES.

Tecmo Super Bowl III: Final Edition

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Tecmo Super Bowl III features all 30 NFL teams from the 1994 season. Each team has real players, and each player has accurate ratings. The game plays a lot like the second entry in the series, but it does contain some fresh features, including: a free agency system, new speech and music, new passing modes, new cinema screens, and a larger field. The most

substantial upgrade is Superstar mode, which lets gamers create up to 19 players, each with such adjustable abilities as agility, speed, and passing accuracy. As in the first two games in the series, the computer is a bit of a pushover, so it's a good idea to play against a friend. Also released for the SNES.

Tecmo Super Hockey

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Hockey, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A Genesis exclusive, *Tecmo Super Hockey* lacks an NHL license, meaning pro hockey teams are represented by city name only. However, the game was sanctioned by the NHLPA, meaning real players based on ratings from the 1993–1994 season are featured. Each player is rated according to agility, passing, shot accuracy, speed, stamina, and stick handling. In addition, goalies have left/right defending capability ratings. The arcade-style action is viewed from the side, with cinemas adding visual impact to slap shots that go in the net and strong checks. Replays are also available. Modes of play include Season, All-Star, and Preseason while options include three game speeds, three difficulty levels, four period lengths, line changes (automatic, manual, or none), and fights and penalties (icing, offsides, interference, and personal fouls) turned on or off. Battery backup lets players save league leaders in GAA, goals, goal percentage, number of shutouts, PIM, save percentage, total assists and points, and team statistics, standings, and season progress. *Tecmo Super Hockey* is fun, but most fans of the sport will want to stick with *NHL 95*.

Tecmo Super NBA Basketball

Publisher: Tecmo. Developer: Tecmo. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

The follow-up to *Tecmo NBA Basketball* (NES), *Tecmo Super NBA Basketball* features all 27 NBA teams of the era, plus more than 320 real players (Michael Jordan is conspicuously absent). The fun, five-on-five action is supplemented by detailed graphics, smooth controls, good sound effects, and some nice features, including: injuries, substitutions, adjustable game speed, instant replays, cinema

screens, digitized speech, team and player stats, and four modes of play: Manual (control a team); Coach (call the plays); Computer (watch the computer play a game); and Skip (instantly see the results of a computer-controlled game). The action is viewed from the side, and battery backup saves Season progress (for regular, reduced, or short seasons). The Super NES version has better voice effects and more fluid animation.

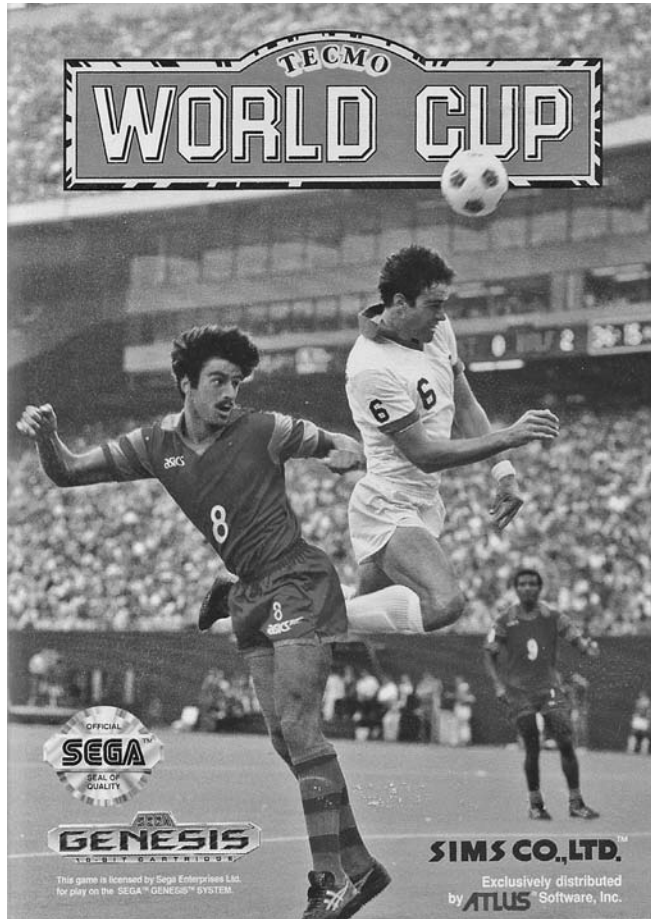
Tecmo World Cup

Publisher: Atlus Software. Developer: SIMS. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Tecmo World Cup lets players select from 24 international teams (from Algeria to the U.S.A.), four soccer formations, six difficulty levels, three half lengths (15, 30, or 45 minutes), and two primary modes of play: Exhibition or Professional. The Tecmo World Cup option is a round robin tournament in which gamers take on the computer or a friend. Regardless of the options selected, players can tackle, steal, pass, switch the player being controlled, and perform throw-ins, corner kicks, kickoffs, and shoot-outs. The $\frac{3}{4}$ view of the large, scrolling playfield is from overhead, and the action moves horizontally. The players are large as well. On each team, the players all look alike, and they don't have numbers. Sound effects are minimal, but there are some nice musical arrangements. The arcade-like action is fairly enjoyable, but the game could've used a few more features, such as player stats and a career mode.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Hyperstone Heist

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.



Tecmo World Cup for the Genesis isn't as popular as *Tecmo Bowl* or *Tecmo Super Bowl*.

The Hyperstone Heist is similar to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time* for the SNES, which was a port of the arcade game, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time*. Unlike the SNES game, which trumps the Genesis cartridge in terms of coloring, scaling (which is non-existent in the Genesis game), and voice effects, players cannot throw enemies toward the screen. The solid (if short), fast, beat-'em-up action lets players take on the role of Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Donatello, or Raphael, each of whom uses his patented weaponry, and each of whom has different moves, such as Donatello's Hurricane Attack and Raphael's Vacuum Slice. There are four three-stage levels, plus a special level that is "packed with brand new challenges that will make you

hurl your pizza lunch.” Hooded ninjas and sewers are overly common sights, but pattern-based bosses Leatherhead, Rocksteady, Tatsu (making a rare video game appearance), Stockman, Krang, and Super Shredder help vary the action. The game did miss the boat by not featuring four-player action.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles:

Tournament Fighters

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Tournament Fighters is a one-on-one fighting game in the mold of *Street Fighter II* (but not as good). Playable brawlers include Raphael, Donatello, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Casey Jones, Ray Fillet, April O’Neil, and Sisyphus. Each character can punch, kick, crouch, jump, throw, taunt, and pull off a number of special moves, such as time bomb, kick and stick, sonic wave, flying head butt, lightning claw, or acid spit. The action takes place in such arenas as a futuristic city, a jungle planet, an ice planet, and an ocean planet. Also released for the NES and SNES, but with a different mix of characters. Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird’s *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic book debuted in 1984 and spawned a popular animated series, several feature films and action figure lines, numerous video games, and various other tie-ins.

The Terminator

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Probe Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Based on the 1984 feature film, *The Terminator* for the Genesis puts players in the Michael Biehn role of Kyle Reese, sent back in time to protect Sarah Connor from the T-800. The *Contra*-style gameplay involves running, jumping, climbing up and down ladders, and shooting such enemies as armored tanks, Skynet aircraft, helicopters, thugs, policemen, and the Terminator himself (including the Endo-Skeleton). In addition to guns, Reese can use grenades and timed detonators, the latter of which can destroy walls. There are four areas to battle through: the future, downtown Los Angeles (including the nightclub scene), the

West Palm Police Station, and the Cyberdine factory. The game is brutally difficult, and this is evident from the start as Reese’s very first enemy is a boss-like tank robot that requires numerous grenades to take down. Reese is frequently surrounded by enemies, making for some cheap hits, but excellent graphics, a killer soundtrack, and fun run-’n’-gun action make the game worth playing. The superior Sega CD version is longer and has better controls. Also released for the Game Gear. The NES and SNES versions are much different.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: BITS Studios. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1993.

An insult to the awesome 1991 film on which it is based, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* suffers from poor controls, clunky gameplay, awful audio, and a surprisingly weak protagonist. The game puts players in the Arnold Schwarzenegger role of a T-800 Terminator (living tissue over a metal endoskeleton), who is sent back in time to protect the future savior of humanity, John Connor, from being assassinated by a T-1000 Terminator (formed of polymimetic liquid-metal). In addition, players must destroy a new form of microchip technology and rescue John’s mother Sarah from a mental institution. What all this amounts to is walking, shooting bad guys, riding a motorcycle, and traversing such locales as a mall, a ranch, a hospital, and a steel mill. The T-800 can punch and kick and use such weapons as a pistol, a machine gun, a shotgun, and a multi-barrelled mini-gun. The SNES rendition has better graphics and sounds, but it’s still a bad game. Also released for the Game Gear. Much different than the Game Boy and NES versions.

Theme Park

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Bullfrog Productions. Business Simulator, 1 player. 1995.

In terms of graphics and sounds, *Theme Park* for the Genesis is a lousy port of the 1994 computer game. However, despite a few drawbacks (the worst being the seemingly clueless handymen), gameplay is much the same, with players trying to create and manage a success-

ful amusement park. This requires a variety of strategic maneuvers, including building fast and fun roller coasters (there are 30 different rides in all), adjusting ticket prices and salaries, hiring entertainers and guards, and deciding where to put bathrooms, lakes, and arcades. Also released for the Jaguar, Saturn, 3DO, PSX, and DS.

Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends

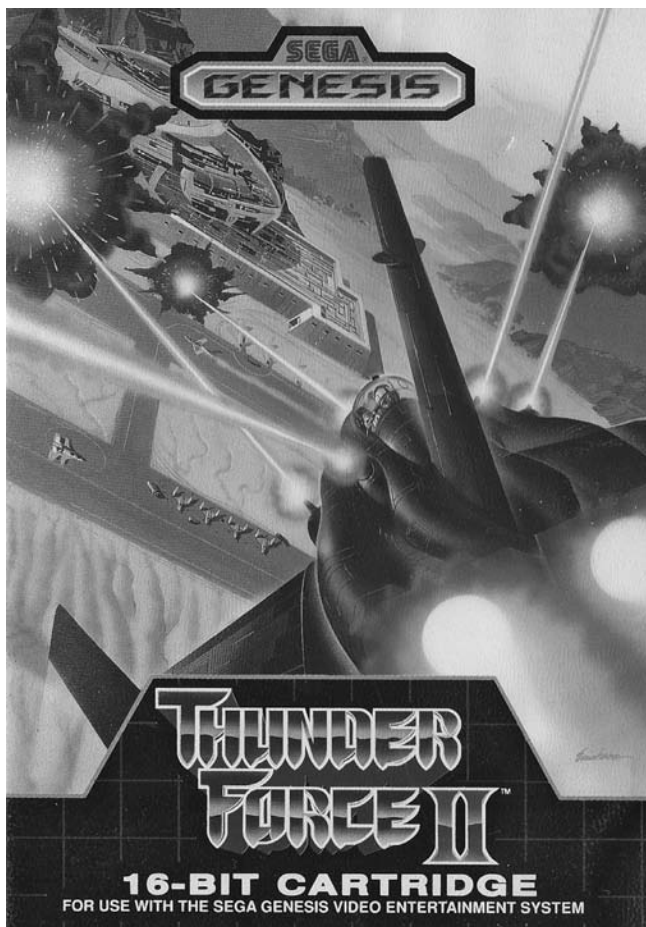
Publisher: T*HQ Software. Developer: Malibu Interactive. Educational/General/Mission-Based Racing, 1 player. 1993.

Take a trip to the Island of Sodor with *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends*, a Genesis game based on the popular *Shining Time Station* children's television series created by Britt Allcroft. Players explore the entire island on a network of tracks, which are viewed from overhead. Players will also design custom courses, answer trivia questions posed by Topham Hatt, perform shipping missions, match and memorize car layouts (via video puzzles), and race other trains. The races include power-ups and other bonuses, making for a fairly enjoyable ride, even for older gamers. Players can name their engineer and select from three difficulty levels: Easy, Medium, and Hard. A Special mode lets even the youngest of gamers get in on the action. Naturally, Thomas is the featured star, but Duck, Toby, James, and Percy are also onboard. Much different than the SNES version.

3 Ninjas Kick Back

Publisher: Psygnosis. Developer: Malibu Interactive. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Loosely based on the 1994 film of the same name, *3 Ninjas Kick Back* for the Super Nin-



Thunder Force II and *Thunder Force III* are two of the best side-scrolling shooters of the era.

tendo is a scrolling combat game supplemented with lots of platforming. There are three selectable characters, each of whom is outfitted with a different weapon. Rocky wields a bo staff, Colt brandishes a sword, and Tum-Tum fights with a pair of sai for battling ninjas, birds, and other repetitious enemies. There are spikes and giant rocks to avoid, ledges to grab, vines to swing on, small spaces to crawl through, secrets to discover, bombs to throw, and more. Levels are timed, and it's sometimes necessary to collect or destroy certain items to complete a level. Environments include the woods, a hospital, a cabin, a secret cave, Japanese gardens, and more. The game is virtually identical to its Super Nintendo counterpart, but with somewhat tighter controls. Decent game, but noth-

ing special. The Sega CD version includes *Hook* as part of a two-game package.

Thunder Force II

Publisher: Technosoft. Developer: Technosoft. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter/Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

When *Thunder Force II* begins, the outer space action is viewed from overhead, with players free to fly in eight directions. The objective is to find and destroy enemy bases while dodging hostile fire (including ground-based attacks). The game then switches to the more common side-scrolling perspective (à la *R-Type* and *Gradius*), complete with end-of-level bosses. Weapon upgrades, which vary between level types, include twin-shot, backfire, wave shot, and more. Blistering gameplay, otherworldly visuals, and a stellar soundtrack make this early Genesis title a winner. The original *Thunder Force* (1983) only appeared on Japanese computers.

Thunder Force III

Publisher: Technosoft. Developer: Technosoft. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Dispensing with the overhead levels found in *Thunder Force II*, *Thunder Force III* is a pure (not to mention great) side-scroller. Players guide a starfighter through six beautifully rendered, super intense stages, each denoted by rocking music, varied aliens, and a distinctive theme (such as lava, trees, or ice). The starfighter is equipped with twin shots, backfire, ultrasonic waves, fire (missiles that crawl along upper and lower surfaces), and other rapid fire weaponry. A special claw weapon revolves around the ship, creating a force field. Released the same year as *Thunder Force AC* (arcade). Followed by: *Thunder Spirits* (SNES) and

Lightening Force: Quest for the Darkstar (Genesis, the Mega Drive version is actually called *Thunder Force IV*).

Thunder Fox

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1991.

In *Thunder Fox*, players select from two characters: Thunder, who is an expert with firearms; and Fox, whose specialty is using a knife (or so the manual says—it's tough to draw the skills distinction). Unfortunately, the game lacks the better looking arcade version's (Taito, 1990) two-player simultaneous mode. Also lacking is the ability to commandeer such vehicles as a jeep, jet skis, and a gyrocopter. The stages have been redesigned to varying degrees as well. What remains is a fairly standard (if terribly difficult) side-scroller, with players



using such weapons as a machine gun, a flame-thrower, jump kicks, and grenades to kill terrorists (who often make the screen overly crowded). Other activities include destroying enemy headquarters, battling bosses and choppers, and breaking open crates for extra lives and points.

The Tick

Publisher: Fox Interactive. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1994.

Based on Ben Edlund's farcical comic book (or, more precisely, the cartoon that the comic book inspired), *The Tick* pits the big, blue, "nigh-invulnerable" super-hero against clowns, Dick Tracy-style bad guys (with names like Chairface, Eyebrows, and The Forehead), and, of course, a seemingly endless supply of ninjas. Gameplay is redundant, with Tick punching and kicking his way across rooftops and down city streets through 44 levels of a 16-chapter storyline. When he's in a bind, Tick can call on Arthur, Paul the Samurai, and other friends to lend a helping hand. Also released for the SNES.

Time Killers

Publisher: Black Pearl Software. Developer: Incredible Technologies. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Like its coin-op counterpart (Strata, 1992), *Time Killers* for the Genesis features eight playable characters of different eras, each outfitted with a different weapon(s): Thugg (stone axe), Leif (battle-axe), Lord Wulf (broadsword), Musashi (katana, daito), Rancid (chainsaw), Orion (electro saber), Matrix (photon blade), and Mantazz (serrated fore-arms). The button-mashing, M-rated action consists of using the aforementioned weaponry, along with various arm, leg, and head attacks, in an extremely violent series of one-on-one bouts, culminating in a battle against Death, who pitted the warriors against one another in the first place. The blood has been toned down a bit from the arcade original, and the animation and graphics have taken a hit as well, but the game is striking for its use of gore and dis-

memberment (after a player's arms have gotten chopped off, he or she is relegated to head and leg attacks), borrowing a page from the *Mortal Kombat* school of gruesome gaming. Had *Time Killers* proven a better (or even competent), more popular title, headline-making controversy would surely have ensued.

Tinhead

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: MicroProse U.K. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

The evil Grim Squidge is stealing stars, prompting Tinhead's galactic quest. Players must guide the cute, bug-eyed robot through four colorful worlds, searching for the lost star in each of the game's 24 levels (meaning some exploration is required). Tinhead fires little balls out of his red domed head in three directions, and finding numbered balls lets him release more balls in progression. Other power-ups enable him to fly and bounce high. Jumping over obstacles and on platforms is sluggish, making a potentially great game merely good. *Tinhead* was also produced (but never released) for the SNES.

Tiny Toon Adventures: ACME All-Stars

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Sports/Misc., 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Buster Bunny, Babs Bunny, Montana Max, and nine other selectable Tiny Toon characters compete in the enjoyable (in small doses) *ACME All-Stars*, which contains two loony main games: Zany Soccer Challenge and Wacky Hoop-a-thon (basketball). Each character has special techniques and power shots, such as Hamton J. Pig's roly-poly-belly-bump, Plucky Duck's anvil chorus (anvils fall from the sky), Dizzy Devil's spin drive, and Shirley the Loon's psy-kick. Using these moves eats up power bar energy that will replenish itself. Both sports offer an angled/overhead perspective of the horizontal field/court, with the three-on-three action scrolling horizontally (and vertically to a lesser degree). There are five themed, musically peppy, obstacle-enhanced arenas: Stadium, Western, Forest, Downtown, and Monty's Playroom. The arenas are colorful (if relatively sparse), and the characters are very

nicely animated. The cartridge also contains three mini-games: Obstacle Course (run four laps); Bowling (consisting of five frames); and Montana Hitting (similar to whack-a-mole). Similar in basic concept to: *Tiny Toon Adventures: Wacky Sports* (GB).

Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster's Hidden Treasure

Publisher: Konami. Developer: Konami. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Steven Spielberg Presents Tiny Toon Adventures goes interactive with *Buster's Hidden Treasure* for the Genesis. Gameplay has Buster running, jumping, crawling, crouching, and wall-bouncing his way through seven cartoon-like levels (33 stages) of typical (if nicely programmed) platforming scenarios, including an enchanted forest, a freaky factory, a mega mountain, and a spooky shipwreck. Levels, which contain obstacles, hidden areas, and surprises galore, are selectable via an overhead world map. Buster battles enemies by hopping on them or by utilizing a slide attack, the latter of which is doable only if Buster is running at full speed. Buster collects bells to increase his health meter and carrots for earning bombs. Gogo Dodo acts as Buster's Guide, and Concord Condor, Little Beeper, and Little Sneezer can be summoned to lend a helping hand. Enemies include Elmyra, Plucky Duck, Hamton, Dizzy Devil, Calamity Coyote, and Montana Max and his Robot (some of Buster's friends have been brainwashed). Fans of *Super Mario World* will thoroughly enjoy this game. The tiny, toony, loony characters appeared in several other games, including *Buster Busts Loose* (SNES) and *Wacky Stackers* (GBA).

TNN Bass Tournament of Champions

Publisher: American Softworks. Developer: ASCII. Sports/Fishing, 1 player. 1994.

Licensed by the now defunct Nashville Network, *TNN Bass Tournament of Champions* is similar to *Super Black Bass*, with players using a variety of lures and other gear to try and catch as many large bass as humanly possible (other types of fish should be avoided). There are six different lakes with hundreds of

fishing spots, and it is up to the player to locate a prime spot using a fish finder. To fish, players must cast their lure and avoid snagging or snapping their lines. Weather and seasonal conditions play roles, as does the transition from day to night. Three tournaments are included in this game, which does a nice job simulating the popular sport. Also released for the SNES.

TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96

Publisher: American Softworks. Developer: ASCII. Sports/Fishing, 1 player. 1996.

Loaded with features and options, *TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96* is the sequel to *TNN Bass Tournament of Champions*. The game lets armchair anglers fish in six U.S. lakes: Lake Okeechobee, Truman Reservoir, Lake Erie West, Dale Hollow, Lake Eufaula and Bull Shoals, each containing hundreds of fishing spots, and each subject to four seasons, four wind strengths, and six weather conditions. Players must drive their boat to look for a good fishing spot (top-down view), cast their line (behind-the-fisherman view), and try to reel in lots of bass (top-down view). By competing successfully (there are three different tournaments—Junior, Senior and the TNN Outdoors Bass), players can win money to upgrade their lures, lines, rods, and reels. Or, gamers can simply enter Free Fishing mode and not worry about the upgrades. The Nashville Network's Fish Fishburne provides onscreen hints.

Todd's Adventures in Slime World

Publisher: Micro World. Developer: Epyx. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A pedestrian port of the highly regarded Atari Lynx game (which benefited from superior graphics, oozy ooze, and eight-player capabilities), *Todd's Adventures in Slime World* for the Genesis has players guiding pencil-pusher-turned-action-hero Todd through the labyrinthine tunnels of a distant planet, dodging dripping slime, jumping over slime pits, and shooting a water gun at such creatures as blobs, scabs, tapeworms, maggots, and blood-flies (beware of deadly slime spray shot from

defeated enemies). Pools of water let Todd wash off slime that has accumulated on his person, and he can use a variety of useful objects, including mega bombs, gems (extra lives), bait (attracts and kills enemies), a jet pack (for flying), and mushrooms (extra time). A map on the right side of the screen helps players track their progress (in the Lynx version, the map is viewable on a separate screen), and two-player action (cooperative and competitive) offers a split-screen view. All the levels and areas from the Lynx original are included.

ToeJam & Earl

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega/JVP. Action/Adventure, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

While some gamers call it slow and tedious, most longtime, hardcore Genesis owners enjoy (or at least respect) *ToeJam & Earl*, a $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective collect-a-thon in which players guide a pair of aliens (three-legged ToeJam and potbellied Earl) around planet Earth, looking to recover 10 missing pieces of their crashed spaceship. Each level contains helpful presents, such as inner tubes, fast shoes, wings, spring shoes, and tomatoes and slingshots (for shooting Earthlings). Some presents, such as bees and school books, are harmful, so players should proceed with caution. Random maps and objects, nonlinear gameplay, funky protagonists, inventive use of music, and inspired two-player action make *ToeJam & Earl* a classic.

ToeJam & Earl in Panic on Funkotron

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega/JVP. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Panic in Funkotron eschews the $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective of the original, adventure-oriented *ToeJam & Earl* in favor of side-scrolling action. Players guide either alien through 17 otherworldly levels, searching for and throwing bottles at ducks, baseball players, cow ghosts, and other earthlings. The funky twosome can no longer find wings or spring shoes, but they can jump, swim, ride on bubbles, play musical rhythm games, interact with friends, use a funk vac (to suck up enemies), and push a

panic button (for speed and invulnerability). The two-player mode is a blast. Followed by: *ToeJam & Earl III: Mission to Earth* (Xbox).

Toki: Going Ape Spit

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1991.

In *Toki: Going Ape Spit*, evil genetic engineer Dr. Stark has kidnapped Toki's girlfriend and turned Toki into an ape. To exact revenge and rescue his girl, Toki must work his way such through such typically themed platforming levels as jungles, seas, volcanic pits, and ice. Toki, who can walk, jump, duck, climb, and swing, moves left to right much of the time, but there's upward and downward movement as well (leading to some blind jumps). To ward off the various bugs, fish, and other creatures he will encounter, Toki, as the title suggests, is equipped with a spitting maneuver, which can be upgraded to three-way, bouncing, and fire. Toki moves slowly, and one hit will kill him, making for a sometimes tedious (if mildly enjoyable) adventure. *Toki: Going Ape Spit* is an offshoot of *Toki*, the 1989 TAD Corporation arcade game, which was ported in straightforward fashion to the NES and Atari Lynx. The biggest difference between *Toki: Going Ape Spit* and *Toki* is that *Going Ape Spit* lacks non-spit power-ups (such as shoes for jumping higher).

Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics!

Publisher: Hi Tech Expressions. Developer: Beam Software. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Frantic Antics! follows the basic plot of *Tom and Jerry: The Movie* (1992), deviating from the classic cartoon by having the famously contentious cat and mouse duo cooperate. Tom or Jerry, depending on the level, must walk, run, jump, duck, and climb through eight obstacle-ridden areas (including The Basement, The Carnival, and The Cabin), throwing ink, footballs, and other projectiles at octopi, clowns, rats, monkeys, battle cars, and other enemies. Despite similar box art, *Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics!* is much different than the more simplistic *Tom and Jerry* (SNES).

Tommy Lasorda Baseball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

A Genesis launch title, making it the first baseball game for the system, *Tommy Lasorda Baseball* lacks Major League licensing, but makes up for it with nice graphics, clear voice effects, and solid, arcade-style gameplay. Gamers select from 24 fictional teams, each corresponding to a Major League city, and each comprised of 25 players ranked according to batting average, homers, catching ability, speed, and other categories. Gamers have direct control of fielders and runners and can substitute players as needed. Options include exhibition mode or 30-game season, three difficulty settings, errors turned on or off, and

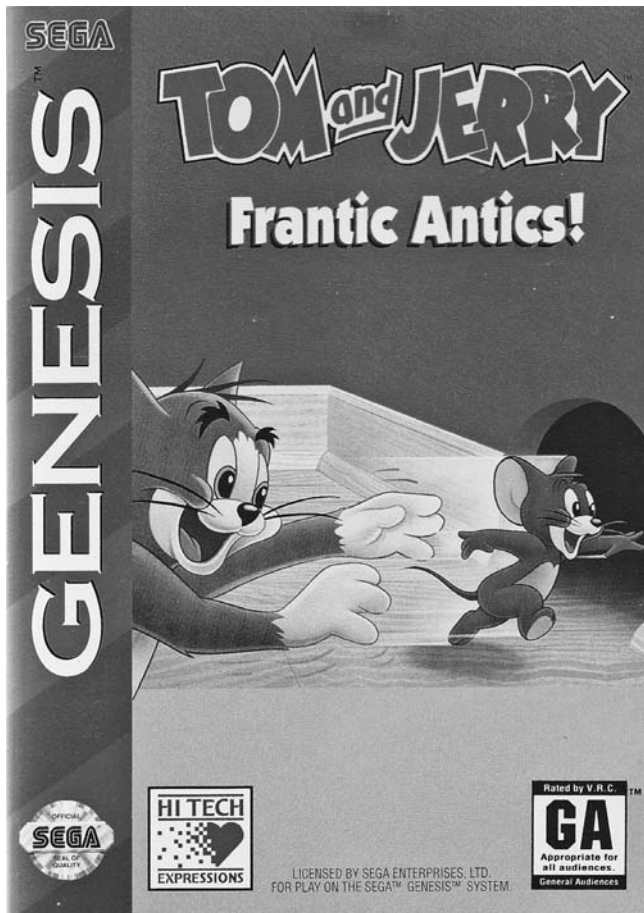
more. The action is viewed from behind the batter and directly overhead. Although a former player, Lasorda is best known for his long coaching stint with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Tony La Russa Baseball

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Stormfront Studios. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Offering between-inning tips and strategies by the famed manager himself, *Tony La Russa Baseball* features more than 500 Major Leaguers, each with stats based on the 1992 MLB season. Batters are ranked according to speed, power, arm, and six other categories while pitchers are rated according to control, velocity, endurance, and bunting ability. Gamers can play (or simply manage)

(or simply manage) an exhibition match, playoffs, an 81-game season, or a full 162-game season. Other features and options include: substitutions, three different field types, relief pitcher warm-ups, digitized pitcher and batter animations, player-created all star teams, errors turned on or off, and the ability to change batting order, defensive lineups, and pitching rotations. While batting, players must select the type of swing from a menu, and then time the swing as the pitch nears the plate. Pitching involves selecting from four pitches and using the control pad to guide the ball to the preferred location. Although rich in features, *Tony La Russa Baseball* is plagued by jerky graphics, lousy controls, and other problems. Followed by: *La Russa Baseball 95*.



Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics! is based on *Tom and Jerry: The Movie* (1992).

Top Gear 2

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Sports Car Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The sequel to *Top Gear* (SNES), *Top Gear 2* adds car

upgrades, weather conditions (including rain, fog, and snow), and a little icon on the left side of the screen indicating damage to your car. Players race day or night through 64 cities (spread over 16 countries), speeding around twisting, turning streets (the action is viewed from behind the car), trying to pass 19 other cars. Players can even jump, spin, and flip their car. Placing in the top 10 lets players continue while placing in the top six scores points representing cash. Buyable upgrades include engine, tires, transmission, nitro system, and armor. In addition, players can drive over such onscreen items as money and nitro boosts. Includes automatic and manual transmission. The SNES version of *Top Gear 2*, released in 1993, has better graphics and controls. Followed by: *Top Gear 3000* (SNES) and other sequels.

Toughman Contest

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Visual Concepts/High Score Productions. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

The NES has *Punch-Out!!*, and the Super NES has *Super Punch-Out!!*, so EA decided to publish a similar (if less cartoonish) boxing game for the Sega Genesis and call it *Toughman Contest*. There are 24 fighters to choose from, each of which can be outfitted with three different power punches (from a list of more than 10), including a haymaker, a head-butt, and a Popeye punch. Unlike the *Punch-Out!!* games, *Toughman* actually has a two-player mode, and a very good one at that. However, in terms of sheer action, *Toughman* doesn't quite live up to the more famous *Punch-Out!!* franchise. *Toughman Contest* is also available for the 32X, but that version is a little faster and has better graphics.

Toxic Crusaders

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1992.

Unlike the NES version, which only lets players control Toxie, *Toxic Crusaders* for the Genesis offers three playable slimy super-heroes: Toxie, who wields a mop, rides radioactive skates, and has Blobbie in tow; Nozone,

who spins on his wheelie foot and spits proton globs; and Junkyard, who punches, spin-jumps, and whips out his long tongue. The six levels of beat-'em-up action take place on Earth and on the Smogulan planet. There are plenty of enemies to battle and toxins to jump over, but poor collision detection, cheap hits, and overall poor programming ruin the experience. Based on the 1991 cartoon series, which was based on the 1985 Troma Entertainment feature film, *The Toxic Avenger*. Much different than the Game Boy version.

Toy Story

Publisher: Disney Interactive. Developer: Traveller's Tales. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1995.

In *Toy Story*, which is based on the groundbreaking Pixar film (1995), players guide Woody, the lanky pull-string cowboy, through five challenging, fun-filled levels: Andy's Room, Andy's Room Part II, Pizza Planet, Sid's Room, and Another Road Picture. Each level is divided into multiple stages, meaning players undergo numerous challenges, such as: helping the green army men past obstacles; keeping up with Buzz Lightyear; escaping a room full of terrified toys; riding Roller Bob and a panic-stricken Rex; and driving R.C. Car really fast to save Buzz and reunite Andy with his toys. Woody can walk, jump, duck under hazards, move hand-over-hand via pipes and beams, and use his pull-string as a lasso (for temporarily tying up other toys) and to swing across pitfalls by grabbing hooks. Hamm the pig, Mr. Potato Head, and others help and hinder our hero. Multiple viewpoints, varied gameplay, stellar animation, and graphics and sounds that do a wonderful job mimicking the film make *Toy Story* a winner. Also released for the Game Boy and SNES.

Toys

Publisher: Absolute Entertainment. Developer: Imagineering. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Designed by David Crane and Alex DeMeo, *Toys* is based on the 1992 Robin Williams feature film. The evil General Zevon has taken

over the Zevo Toy Factory, manufacturing an army of deadly military toys disguised as ordinary toys. The General's nephew, Leslie, is a kid at heart and the character players control. Using water balloons, windup ducks, racecars, peanut guns, soccer balls, and numerous other Good Toy weapons, which are acquired by gathering up gift boxes, players fend off jeeps, tanks, jets, soldiers, bulldozers, exploding Elvis dolls, and other Bad Toys. During the toy-battling action, General Zevo's security cameras keep an eye on Leslie, and that ties in to the goal in each of the first three levels (Toy Factory, Cafeteria, and Warehouse): to destroy all the cameras with a squirt gun. In the fourth and final level, players must board an airplane, fly to the General's Command Center high above a mini-Manhattan skyline, dodge enemy bullets while piloting through recharge coils, and crash into the window of General Zevo's headquarters. Viewed from an isometric perspective, *Toys* is mildly entertaining, but tough to beat. Also released for the SNES.

Trampoline Terror!

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: NCS/Masaya. Puzzle/Maze, 1 player. 1990.

Viewed from an overhead perspective, *Trampoline Terror!* is an odd little puzzler in which players guide the titular boy around a grid of squares, triggering self-destruct switches. Triggering multiple switches of the same color consecutively grants power-ups (invincibility, frozen enemies, and the like) while triggering all the switches destroys the entire grid. In addition to switches, grid squares consist of: trampolines, which enable high jumping, but disappear after repeated use; tiles, which enable smaller jumps, but never wear out; and warps, which transport the boy from one spot to another. There are 32 grids, plus a boss level.

Traysia

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Telenet Japan. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1992.

Traysia puts players in the role of a young man named Roy (along with his party of three), adventuring through vast kingdoms, battling

sorcerers and monsters (including slimes and ghosts), searching for treasure, talking to townsfolk, making friends, gaining experience as a swordsman, donning suits of armor, navigating a cumbersome menu system, and using gold and gems to upgrade weaponry and fortify defenses. Exploration is viewed from overhead, as are battles, which evoke *Shining Force* and the early *Ultima* titles. Commands during fights include attack, magic, move/defend, and run. The game offers a plethora of items to obtain, including food, magic, chain mail, shields, swords, arrows, axes, and maces. For exceedingly patient/hardcore RPG fans only.

Triple Play Gold Edition

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1996.

The sequel to *Triple Play 96*, *Gold Edition* sticks closely to the design of its predecessor, meaning gamers are given a close-up view of the batter, more than 700 Major League Baseball players, 28 realistic stadiums, and seasonal stats saved to battery. Other than roster and player updates (including 1996 opening day rosters and schedules), the only substantial changes to the formula are: Pro Mode, in which the computer opponent plays more aggressively; and a new pitching control interface, in which players select a pitch with the d-pad and then aim it over the plate. Followed by: *Triple Play 97* (PSX), *Triple Play 98* (PSX), *Triple Play 99* (PSX), *Triple Play 2000* (PSX, N64), and other sequels.

Triple Play 96

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Extended Play Productions. Sports/Baseball, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

The first game in the *Triple Play* series, *Triple Play 96* offers fast, fun, arcade-style action, with plenty of realism thrown in for good measure. The game lacks MLB licensing (meaning team names and logos are fictional), but all the players from the 1995 season are featured (thanks to MLBPA licensing). More than 2,500 frames of animation are on display as

gamers steal bases, make diving catches, hit homeruns, bunt the ball, get injured, adjust their batting stance, collide with other players, time their hits, make aggressive plays (for example, an aggressive throw gets to the base faster, but has an increased chance of being a wild throw), and much more. The batting perspective gives a good, close-up look at the batter, with the view switching to $\frac{3}{4}$ overhead when the ball gets hit into play. Other features include: player trades, 28 different stadiums, 12 types of pitches, hot and cold streaks, seasonal play, the ability to create players, statistics tracked and saved (via battery) in 25 categories, and simple, intuitive controls. Thanks to excellent gameplay, graphics, and sounds (including organ music and terrific crowd noise), this is one of the best baseball games of the era.

Triple Score: 3 Games in 1

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Action Puzzle/Motorcycle Racing/Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Triple Score collects three previously released Genesis titles in one cartridge: *Columns*, *Super Hang-On*, and *World Championship Soccer*.

Trouble Shooter

Publisher: Vic Tokai. Developer: Vic Tokai. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Housed in packaging decorated by a pair of scantily clad babes wielding guns, *Trouble Shooter* is as enjoyable as the SF/cheesecake box art would indicate. Players control Madison, a wealthy debutante and part-time heroine. As she flies via her jetpack, the lovely Crystal mimics her every move. Madison shoots to the right while Crystal can shoot left or right, meaning players can fire at enemies (robots, missiles, saw blades, gun turrets, vessels, and the like) coming from behind as well as double up firepower for shooting forward when necessary. This on-the-fly strategy makes for an inventive, immersive, and entertaining shooter. The game consists of five beatable, fairly short levels: Central Line Shopping Plaza, the Underground Hideout, Outside Colossus, Inside

Colossus, and The Escape. Prior to beginning a level, players can select a special weapon that is usable when the standard weapon has been charged up. Rocking music and nice graphics add to the fun. It's just a shame that there's no two-player mode. It's also a shame that the sequel, *Battle Mania Daiginjou*, was only released in Japan.

Troy Aikman NFL Football

Publisher: Tradewest. Developer: Williams Entertainment. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Sporting an elevated, behind-the-scrimmage-line view of the action, *Troy Aikman NFL Football* features all 28 NFL teams, more than 100 offensive plays, more than 50 defensive plays, and six field surfaces: grass, mud, dirt, snow, rain, and artificial turf. Players can turn penalties on or off, adjust quarter lengths, call timeouts, watch instant replays, call audibles, make fair catches, and more. The legendary Dallas Cowboys quarterback is the only NFL star in the game, but players can design their own teams, seasons, and plays. A special coaching mode lets gamers call plays for the computer to run. Onlookers cheer, tackled players grunt and groan, and the announcer speaks a few bits of dialogue. Also released for the SNES and Atari Jaguar.

True Lies

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Beam Software. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

One of the better movie-based titles of the era, *True Lies* puts players in the Arnold Schwarzenegger role of Harry Tasker. The action follows the James Cameron-directed film to a surprisingly high degree as Harry makes his way through a variety of labyrinthine levels, including a chateau, a subway, a huge mall, an oil refinery, and the snowy outdoors (with snowboarding enemies). In addition to finding his way out, Tasker has a specific task in each area, such as destroying all the weapons crates, attaching a modem to a computer, or finding keys to disarm a nuclear warhead. The action is viewed from a top-down perspective,

with Harry dodging obstacles (such as steam and mines) while using a hand gun, a shot gun, an uzi, grenades, a flamethrower, and other weapons to kill terrorists belonging to the Crimson Jihad. One level deviates from the formula by putting Tasker in a Harrier jet, shooting trucks and other vehicles. Includes digitized scenes from the film and tips from the Tom Arnold character Albert "Gib" Gibson. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES.

Truxton

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

As rocking music plays in the background, gamers pilot their Super Fighter ship over eight different asteroids (comprising starry space and an asteroid fortress), firing away at turret guns, anti-aircraft guns, meteors, storehouses, energy buoys, escape hatches, bullet-spraying Roons, acid-spewing Berangs, and other enemies, many of which are large, and many of which swoop, swerve, and otherwise crowd the screen (enemies appearing from behind can cause some frustration). There are three types of standard weapons: Power Shots (red spread fire); Truxton Beam (steady succession of large green bullets); and Thunder Laser (blue streams that lock onto enemies), all of which can be enhanced three times by grabbing lots of Power Boosters ("P" icons). There's also a super cool Destroyer Bomb, which takes the form of a giant skull and affects all on-screen enemies and their bullets. A nice port of the 1988 Toaplan arcade game, *Truxton* for the Genesis adds a welcome feature to the already fun formula: rapid fire (by pressing C). Recommended for fans of *Fire Shark* and *Raiden Trad*. Followed by: *Truxton II* (arcade).



A quality shooter, *Truxton* is based on the 1988 Toaplan arcade game of the same name.

Turrican

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: The Code Monkeys. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Turrican is a hardcore platform shooter that will challenge gamers from the get-go. Players guide an armored warrior through five worlds of a lost space colony named Alterra, performing tricky platform jumps (watch out for bottomless pits) and firing laser bullets at fish, giant insects, acid dripping spiders, Dead Head, Trash Master, and other enemies. Hazards to avoid include meteors, spikes, missiles, laser cutters, poison dripping from stalactites, and more. In addition to a laser gun, players use a lightning whip, mines, grenades, and a power line, the latter of which zaps foes with vertical ionizing bolts. The warrior can even

roll up into a buzz saw, which will remind Nintendo fans of Samus's curl up maneuver in *Metrod* (NES). Areas to battle through include a maze of caverns, an atmosphere production facility, a vertical control tower, and more. Visually, the game is below average (backgrounds are nonexistent), but the sound effects are solid, and the music is very nice. Just be prepared to die a lot, even in the first level. Adapted from the 1990 Commodore 64 computer game. Also released for the GB and TG-16. Followed by: *Mega Turrican* (Genesis), *Super Turrican* (SNES), and *Super Turrican 2* (SNES).

Twin Cobra

Publisher: Sega. Developer: American Treco. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Although harder and less colorful than its coin-op counterpart (Tatio, 1987), *Twin Cobra* for the Genesis is a fine game, especially for the masochist residing in most every hardcore shooter fan. Players pilot the titular chopper through 10 hectic levels, firing missiles (the default weapon), lasers, spread-shots, and four-way fire at airplanes, tanks, gunboats, battle-ships, armored carriers, destroyers, and gun turrets. Power-ups provide weapon switch-outs, weapon upgrades, and extra bombs. One setback is the lack of a two-player simultaneous mode, which the arcade version does offer. Similar to: *Tiger-Heli* and *Fire Shark*. Also released for the NES. Followed by: *Twin Cobra 2* (arcade).

Two Crude Dudes

Publisher: Data East. Developer: Data East. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Despite flickering in the two-player mode and the absence of digitized voice effects, *Two Crude Dudes* is a nice port of Data East's *Two Crude* (1990), retaining much of the arcade original's fun and humor. Players guide Biff and Spike, a pair of big, bruising mercenaries, through six levels of a nuked (by accident) New York City, punching and kicking crooks, dogs, wrestlers, mutants, and other enemies along the way. The *Batman*-style onomatopoeias

("Wham!" "Krak!") make the game stand out, as do large character graphics, multiple scrolling backgrounds, and the ability for players to throw cars, rocks, tanks, people, and other objects.

Tyrants: Fight Through Time

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Sensible Software. World-Building Simulator, 1 player. 1993.

Much like *Populous*, *Tyrants* puts players in the role of a god lording it over throngs of mere mortals. This entails leading one of four factions through eras of the past, present, and future, including: Caveman, Old Testament, Roman, Norman, Middle Ages, Victorian, World War I, World War II, Modern Man, and the Mother of All Battles. Gameplay consists of building weapons factories, arming small soldiers (with everything from spears to nukes to flying saucers), battling other armies, managing resources, and more. Each era is divided into three graphically redundant battlefield islands, with the strategic, point-and-click gameplay revolving primarily around how many men to assign to each task. *Tyrants* boasts four megabits of digitized speech recorded by professional radio actors. Entering JOOLS as the password unlocks a simplified version of *Sinistar* (arcade, 1982).

Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

Publisher: Williams Entertainment. Developer: Avalanche Software. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

This game is essentially an upgrading of *Mortal Kombat 3*. It includes 23 immediately playable fighters (including Scorpion, Sub-Zero, Sonya, and Reptile) and two bosses, plus some hidden characters (including Human Smoke and the original Sub-Zero). Unlike the arcade version of *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3* (Midway, 1995), Rain is a playable character. However, Sheeva didn't make the cut, there are 10 Shao Treasure to find instead of 12, and certain levels are absent, such as the Balcony, the Graveyard, and the Belltower. Fortunately, the game does adapt the new combos, fatalities, bal-lities, and brutalities. Gamers can challenge

the computer or a friend to one-on-one action, engage in a little two-on-two fighting, or enter an eight-fighter tournament. Followed by: *Mortal Kombat 4* (arcade, GBC, N64, PSX), *Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe* (Xbox 360, PS3), and various other sequels.

Ultimate Qix

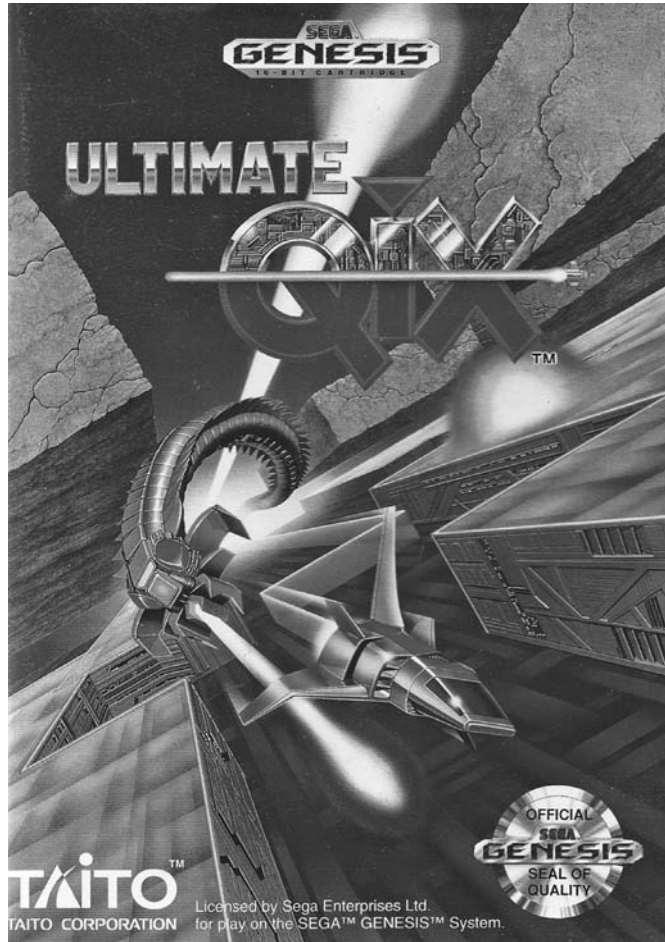
Publisher: Taito. Developer: ITL. Maze, 1 player. 1991.

A modern reworking of *Qix*, which Taito released to the arcades a decade earlier, *Ultimate Qix* features the same basic gameplay, but offers a number of new bells and whistles. Using a spaceship (a cursor in the original *Qix*), players draw lines on the screen, avoiding enemies while closing in spaces to eliminate sections of the playfield. There are four difficulty levels, the hardest of which requires players to clear at least 90% of the screen. Additions to the formula include boss creatures, an outer space theme (there are 16 rounds of play), planetary surface graphics (as opposed to solid brown coloring), and weapons and power-ups: lasers, speed, enemy freeze, timer stop, three-way fire, smart bomb crush, and extra lives. Unlike *Qix*, drawing slowly does not produce extra points, eliminating a key strategy. Also, despite (or because of) its minimalistic look and sound, *Qix* remains a purer, more aesthetically appealing experience. Similar to: *Super Qix* (arcade). Other games in the series include: *Qix II* (arcade) and *Qix Neo* (PSX).

Uncharted Waters

Publisher: Koei. Developer: Koei. Role-Playing Game/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

In *Uncharted Waters*, players assume the role of a 16th century Portuguese captain, sail-



Ultimate Qix takes the basic line-drawing/space-enclosing formula established by *Qix* (arcade, 1981) and adds weapons, power-ups, and fancy graphics.

ing the high seas as a merchant, trader, or pirate. The goal is fame and fortune, which is achieved by bartering with shop owners, navigating to distant lands, using earned profits to obtain new ships and navigational tools, fighting pirates and braving storms, retrieving hidden treasure, visiting famous ports, entering various buildings (including inns, lodges, and palaces), and much more. The turn-based battles offer five selectable actions: view the enemy ship's statistics, fire cannons, rush on board, flee, and wait, with the objective being to sink the enemy flagship or force it to retreat. Also released for the NES and Super NES. Followed by: *New Horizons* (Genesis, SNES).

Universal Soldier

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: The Code Monkeys. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Inspired by the 1992 movie starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren, *Universal Soldier* puts players in the Van Damme role of Ultimate Fighting Machine Luc Devreux, who must battle his way through 11 locations, including buildings, mountains, and the jungles of Vietnam. Devreux wields a laser rifle that only shoots forward, but his steerable laser whip (accessible by standing still and holding in the fire button) can maneuver 360 degrees to destroy nearby aliens, dragons, bees, and other enemies, many of which are robotic. The game plays a lot like *Turrican*, evidenced in part by Devreux's ability to turn into a spiky ball and roll over enemies. The action moves at a fast pace, and the levels are filled with moving platforms, swarming enemies, and plentiful power-ups (ricochet, longer laser, triple beams, etc.), which are found in flying containers and hidden boxes. Continues and passwords make the game beatable, and there are two difficult levels: Normal and Hard. Though it bears little resemblance to the movie, *Universal Soldier* is a solid platform shooter. Recommended for fans of the *Contra* series and *The Terminator* (Sega CD). Also released for the Game Boy.

Unnecessary Roughness '95

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade. Sports/Football, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Despite its edgy sounding title, *Unnecessary Roughness '95* is not an over-the-top grid-iron game with crazy tackles or insane passes. Rather, it's a standard football title sporting three modes of play: Exhibition, Season, and Two-Minute Drill, the latter of which has players behind by four points and trying to score a late-in-the-game touchdown. *Unnecessary Roughness '95* lacks authentic team names and logos, but NFLPA licensing allows for 1,400 real NFL players, each rated according to agility, skill, speed, and strength. Other features and options include: three difficulty levels; adjustable quarter lengths (5, 10, or 15 minutes);

booth commentary by Al Michaels; two camera angles (close during runs, distant during passes); and digitized cards for 150 star players. Battery backup saves league and championship standings. Pigskin purists and casual football fans alike will want to stick with the *Madden* series.

Urban Strike: The Sequel to Jungle Strike

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Foley Hi Tech/Granite Bay Software. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1994.

Urban Strike differs from the previous games in the series (*Desert Strike* and *Jungle Strike*) by having players perform certain missions on foot (shooting bullets and firing rockets), many of which are timed. This deviation from the formula is not for the better, unfortunately, leaving many *Strike* fans disappointed. Luckily, there are plenty of standard missions as well, letting players pilot three types of armored vehicles: a Mohican helicopter (equipped with missiles and rockets); a Blackhawk assault chopper (no missiles, but twice the guns); and a Ground Assault Vehicle (slow, but powerful). Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES. Followed by: *Soviet Strike* (PSX, Saturn), *Nuclear Strike* (PSX), *Nuclear Strike 64* (N64), and *Desert Strike Advance* (GBA).

Valis

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Telenet Japan. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Valis stars Yuko Ahso, a high school senior who dons an armored bikini and battles her way through three worlds: Human, Dream, and Dark. Yuko can run, jump, slide, and crouch, and she can upgrade her sword to shoot bullets, lasers, arrows, cutters, and grenades (at the various flying, pouncing, and walking enemies). Defeating bosses grants Yuko with magic powers: earthquake, ice feather, flame ring, tornado, giga thunder, and death flash. The action is easy and slow, meaning the anime cut scenes are the best part of the game. Adapted from the Japanese computer game, which got its name from the Philip K. Dick novel.

Valis III

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Telenet Japan. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

In *Valis III*, Yuko Ahso returns to protect Dreamland. However, there are now two additional selectable characters: Valna, who wields a staff and can do fire star, chill cube, and thunder storm magic; and Cham, who creates fire dragon attacks and shoots ice arrows and lightning bolts. As in the original *Valis*, sliding, which makes the character invincible, is an important maneuver for going through tight spaces. *Valis III* was also released for the TurboGrafx-CD, but with more levels, more cut scenes, and better audio. See also: *Syd of Valis* (Genesis).

Vapor Trail

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Data East/Riot. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

A port of Data East's *Vapor Trail: Hyper Offence Formation* (arcade, 1989), *Vapor Trail* is a typical (if enjoyable) shooter, with players flying one of three different ships (each varying according to speed, power, and weaponry) over cities, forests, and deserts (six levels in all), destroying such commonplace enemies as jets, helicopters, tanks, and planes. Power-ups provide flame attacks, homing missiles, lasers, and the like. Interactive backgrounds set the game apart somewhat, as do laughably bad voice effects. Slowdown is a factor in two-player mode, and the arcade original has richer graphics and smarter enemy A.I.

VectorMan

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1995.

Featuring a storyline similar to Pixar's *WALL-E* (2008), *VectorMan* is a platform shooter in the mold of *Contra*, but with a distinct visual style; post apocalyptic 2D with objects rendered in 3D. A humanoid robot formed of green orbs, VectorMan runs and jumps (boot-blasts make him jump higher), and he can fire his weapon in eight directions (at such enemies as grenade-launching How-

itzers and ground-shaking Sludge Pilots), including straight down to slow his fall. His standard/unlimited weapon is a ball gun, but he can shoot television receivers to trade for a rapid fire gun, a wave gun, a bolo gun, an orb, or a nucleus shield. Destroyed television receivers also emit extra time, health, save points, photons, 1-ups, point multipliers, and morph icons, the latter good for flying, drilling through floors, swimming faster, and more. Released relatively late in the life of the Genesis, *VectorMan* really shows off what the system can do in terms of graphics, sounds, and gameplay. Controls are spot-on, and the action is fast, fun, and brutally challenging.

VectorMan 2

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1996.

With its excellent blend of morphing, platforming, and shooting, *VectorMan 2* plays a lot like the first game, but with 25 levels to blast through instead of 16. Also, VectorMan's morphs are now level-specific, and, with the exception of the tornado morph, he maintains each morph for the entire level. Morphs include: helicopter (hover and control his descent); skates (roll through level at high speed); tornado (power of raging whirlwind); and tank (ultimate firepower). When certain insect enemies are destroyed, they leave icons for turning VectorMan into a Shell Bug, a Scorpion, a Rhino Beetle, a Tick, or a Fire Ant, each of which moves differently and has specific attacks. The storyline, which picks up where the first game left off, involves a mutant strain of insects, meaning VectorMan shoots at such enemies as Shell Slug, Laser Larva, Balloon Bug, and Crabby Hermit. As *Donkey Kong Country* did for the Super Nintendo, the *VectorMan* series gave owners of the aging Genesis something to be proud of amidst such next-generation consoles as the PlayStation and the Nintendo 64.

Venom/Spider-Man: Separation Anxiety

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Software Creations. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Like its SNES twin, *Separation Anxiety* for the Genesis is the two-player sequel to the one-player *Maximum Carnage* (which offered more in the way of crawling on buildings). Players guide Spider-Man and Venom through streets, bridges, the woods, a mall, a construction site, and other areas, punching, kicking, ramming, and using webbing on various enemies, including Venom's symbiote children (echoing the six-issue *Venom: Lethal Protector* comic book series, as opposed to the four-issue *Venom: Separation Anxiety*). Grabbing icons enables players to call on Captain America, Ghost Rider, Hawkeye, and Daredevil for cameo assistance.

Viewpoint

Publisher: American Sammy. Developer: Nexus Interact. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1994.

Viewpoint suffers frequent slowdown when the screen gets crowded, and there have been some concessions in terms of graphics and sounds. However, this is still an admirable and ambitious port of the 1992 American Sammy arcade game. The isometric-perspective action plays a lot like the coin-op classic *Zaxxon* (1982), with gamers flying diagonally over outer space landscapes, seas, and mechanized areas, shooting lasers, firebombs, homing bombs, and shockwaves at such alien invaders as tanks, ships, gun turrets, bosses, and robotic worms, crabs, and fish. Thanks to the game's "viewpoint," it's oftentimes difficult to tell where the player's ship is in relation to the obstacles and enemies (unlike *Zaxxon*, which suffered this problem to a smaller degree, there is no altitude meter). However, the game is an entertaining challenge nevertheless. Shaded polygonal graphics give a good, futuristic look to the proceedings. Also released for the PSX, Neo Geo, and Neo Geo CD.

Virtua Fighter 2

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

Virtua Fighter 2 for the Genesis lost much in translation when compared to its arcade counterpart (Sega, 1995), most notably the switch from 3D polygonal graphics to 2D

sprites and the exclusion of fighters Lion Rafale and Shun Di. Other weaknesses include choppy animation, garbled voice effects, and sluggish gameplay. In addition, this version, which pales in comparison to the Saturn release, is more of a button-masher than the coin-op classic (though players can still pull off hundreds of fighting moves). Gamers fight as one of eight different characters: Akira, Pai, Jacky, Sarah, Kage, Wolf, Lau, or Jeffry, each of whom is equipped with six different fighting uniforms. To give *Virtua Fighter 2* its proper due, Sega should have used the SVP technology from *Virtua Racing*, though it did drive up the price for that title to \$79.99 (suggested retail). Followed by: *Virtua Fighter 3* (arcade), *Virtua Fighter 4* (arcade, PS2), *Virtua Fighter 5* (PS3), and other sequels.

Virtua Racing

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A respectable port of Sega's 1992 arcade game, *Virtua Racing* for the Genesis is the only game for the system to include SVP (super virtual play) technology, which gives the oversized cartridge an extra chip for producing polygonal graphics and four different viewpoints. Like the arcade game, this version has three tracks, though the graphics, while impressive for the Genesis, aren't as smooth or as colorful. A second player can join in via split-screen action, and accessing a hidden mirror mode will reverse the tracks for added replay value. *Virtua Racing* for the Genesis will not work on the 32X, but that's no great loss since the 32X is home to *Virtua Racing Deluxe*, which has cooler crashes, better graphics, more music, two additional tracks, and two additional cars. Followed by: *VR Virtua Racing* (Saturn).

Virtual Bart

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Sculptured Software. Multi-Genre Action, 1 player. 1994.

Prime time cartoon character Bart Simpson is caught in Martin Prince's virtual reality

machine, resulting in six mini-games of varying quality. In *Dino Bart*, the Boy Blunder (as a dinosaur) walks left and right, jumps, ducks, enters caves, snaps his tail, growls, and deals with such enemies and obstacles as velociraptors, tar pits, lava, and radioactive waste. *Doomsday Bart* features a behind-the-motorcycle, *Hang On*-like perspective, with Bart firing water balloons at enemy bikers. *Baby Bart* is a platformer in which an infantile Bart swings on trees, hops from clotheslines, rides a carriage, shoots a pacifier, and more. *Mount Splashmore* has Bart, viewed from behind, going quickly down a water park slide, grabbing extra time while avoiding other riders and obstacles. *Pork Factory Pig Bart* is a platformer in which a piggish Bart bounces on his tail, jumps, use color coded keys, and rescues his pig friends. In *Virtual Class Picture* (the best game of the bunch), Bart is viewed from behind as he hides behind objects and throws eggs and tomatoes at his classmates. Also released for the SNES. See also: *The Simpsons: Bart vs. The Space Mutants* (Genesis) and *The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare* (Genesis).

Virtual Pinball

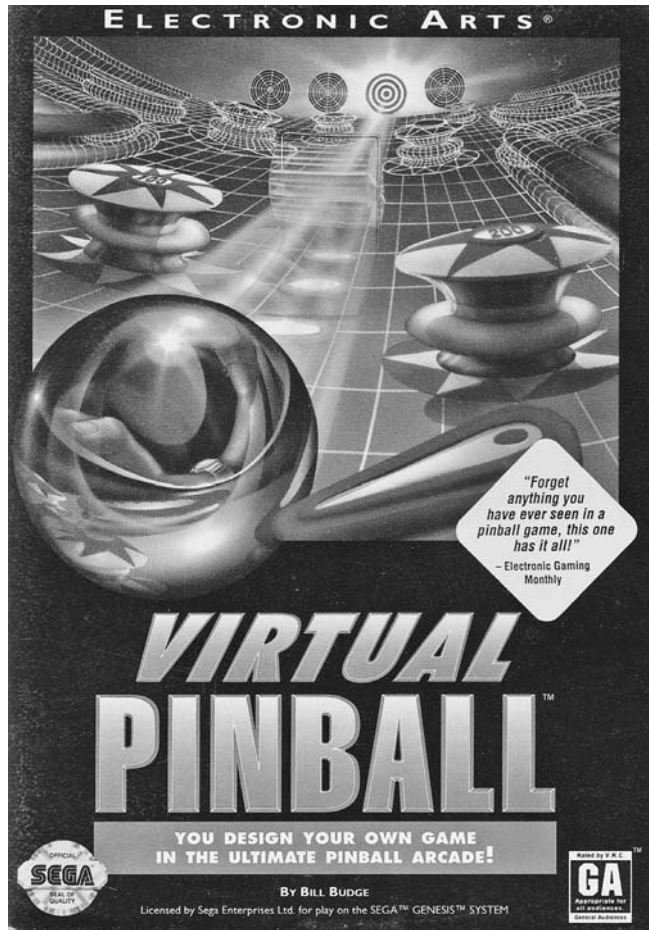
Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: BudgeCo. Pinball, 1-4 players (alternating). 1993.

Programmed by Bill Budge, who designed the computer classic, *Pinball Construction Set* (1983), *Virtual Pinball* is ambitious in concept, but that doesn't make it a great pinball game (though it does qualify as a decent one). Players can create and save (via battery) up to 10 of their own pinball tables, using 6 table themes, 10 backgrounds, and 38 game parts, including bumpers, sling shots, kick walls, drop targets, rollovers, pegs, kick holes, spinners, gates, and jackpots. In addition, there are 29 premade tables.

Unfortunately, the game is short on table goals and hidden surprises, the tables are flat, and all the flippers are small. Hitting certain targets initiates multi-ball, but the wide, scrolling screen can't follow all the balls, meaning the player will lose the extras pretty quickly. Prior to the release of *Virtual Pinball*, Electronic Arts challenged the leading video game magazines of the day to "send us the coolest games you can dream up." *GamePro* was the winner, meaning one of the tables contains a *GamePro* logo.

VR Troopers

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Syrox Developments. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.



Virtual Pinball lets users design, save, and play their own tables.

A below average fighting game, *VR Troopers*, which is short for Virtual Reality Troopers, is based on Saban's syndicated live action series of the same name (think *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*), which ran for two seasons spanning 1994–1996. Ryan Steele, J.B. Reese, and Kaitlin Star, each of whom has his or her own special move — atomic shuriken, laser lance, and power ring respectively — have been sucked into an arcade game. In order to escape, they must engage in a series of one-on-one battles against nine of Grimlord's monsters and "Skugs," including Ryan Steele (blast, mine, and hard shell), Dark Heart (blast, cloak, and shield), and Kongbot (bark blast, charge, and spin). In addition to special moves, Steele, Reese, and Star can pull off a variety of punches and kicks. The final boss, Kamelion, can assume the form of the playable characters and use their abilities. Modes of play include: Story Game, VS. Battle, and CPU Duel. Also released for the Game Gear.

Wacky Worlds Creativity Studio

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Head Games. Art, 1 player. 1994.

Wacky Worlds Creativity Studio is loads of fun for younger gamers, who can manipulate tons of virtual stickers (including animated stickers) to create all types of scenes (wacky or otherwise) in six different worlds: Sci-Fi Planet (starring Toejam and Earl), Monster Movie, The Toy House, Under the Sea, Safari Island, and Fairytale Kingdom. Interfacing, which is achieved via standard controller or Sega's Mega Mouse, involves guiding Sonic the Hedgehog's gloved hand to grab and place stickers, add letters and words, make pictures move, color and erase, and select song stickers (featuring reggae, funk, house, and king and queen music). The best thing about *Wacky Worlds Creativity Studio* is that you never run out of stickers! Fans of the game may also want to try *Art Alive* (Genesis) and *Mario Paint* (SNES).

Wardner

Publisher: Mentrix. Developer: Visco. Side-Scrolling Platform/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Wardner has players guiding a plump, cartoonish boy through six stages of the left-to-right or dungeon maze variety, including dark forests, a house of tricks, a castle, a tower, and a hidden underground room. The boy walks, jumps, and climbs, and he can shoot fireballs at the ghosts, dragons, rock monsters, and other enemies he will encounter. Defeated enemies leave behind gold that can be used in shops between stages to purchase such items as a clock (for extra time), a magic mantel (allows one extra hit), and weapon upgrades (zigzag, overhead looping pattern, rapid fire straight ahead). Despite some graphical concessions, *Wardner* is a nice port of Taito's 1987 arcade game. The Genesis version has an altered intro, certain boss changes, an altered final level, and various other differences, most of which are minor (such as the missing information bar at the bottom of the screen). *Wardner*, which is named after the main bad guy in the game, is not as good as *Ghouls'n Ghosts*, but fans of the ghoulish Capcom classic should enjoy it.

Warlock

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Realtime Associates/Trimark Interactive. Platform Shooter/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

Loosely based on the 1989 film of the same name, *Warlock* is sort of like *Castlevania*, but with the protagonist — a modern druid warrior — shooting magic blasts instead of wielding a whip. Also, *Warlock* is not as good as *Castlevania*, partly because of an extra animation in which the warrior ducks when he shoots, causing a delayed reaction. The objective is to prevent the Warlock from assembling six ancient runestones, which is done by running, jumping, riding elevators, climbing stairs, avoiding obstacles (such as deadly ooze and swinging axe blades), and shooting bats, slime monsters, archers, gargoyles, vultures, horsemen, and other enemies. To assist in the quest, players can collect such spells as smart bombs, healing, protection, revival, and a staff (which shakes loose hidden items). In addition, players control an orb that can pick up spells from a distance and attack otherwise out-of-reach enemies. Unfortunately, the various attack

methods aren't as cool or as fun to use as the ones in *Castlevania*. Levels, which exude gothic horror, include: New England, The Cavern Below the Lake, A Grim Garden, Inside The Wizards Castle, The Cemetery, The Mountains, and The Underworld.

WarpSpeed

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade.
Space Combat Simulator, 1 player. 1993.

Viewed from inside the cockpit, *WarpSpeed* has players piloting one of four different star fighters: the Stinger, Striker, Stalker, or Slasher. There are seven battle scenarios, plus a Campaign mode, all of which revolved around protecting space stations from hostile aliens. Despite its title, the game appears to move pretty slowly as players dodge asteroids and mine fields and shoot what look like huge fireballs (two at a time — one on the left and one on the right) at the alien vessels. There are eight quadrants of space to protect, each comprised of 64 sectors. The ship players command is equipped with a long range scanner, which brings up an 8x8 overhead map grid that lets players warp to bases (for repairs and refueling) or enemy ships (to engage them in battle). In addition, a hyperwave receiver lets players communicate with space stations and with the aliens (who dare the player to duels in space). Battles are somewhat tepid, but the game looks nice and is certainly playable. Also released for the SNES.

Warrior of Rome

Publisher: Micronet. Developer: Micronet.
Strategy, 1 player. 1991.

Warrior of Rome takes place in 48 B.C., with you in the role of none other than Julius Caesar, commanding the forces of Rome. Four missions await: Hagia Triada, where you must get your soldiers to the waiting ships; In the Mediterranean, where you engage in a sea battle while protecting your landing ship; Egypt, which is a frontal attack on the Egyptian resistors; and Storming the Palace, where you must reach the deepest chamber of the palace to rescue Cleopatra. Gameplay consists of commanding troops on a grid-based map, digging

pits and barricades, retreating from battle to recover strength, monitoring battles in progress, preventing invaders from overrunning your bases, setting courses for combat vessels, repairing your ships, marching around columns while facing deadly lances, and much more. Recommended for fans of such games as *Genghis Khan II: Clan of the Gray Wolf* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.

Warrior of Rome II

Publisher: Micronet. Developer: Micronet.
Strategy, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Warrior of Rome II ups the ante on the original game by incorporating two-player split-screen action featuring real-time battles. As Julius Caesar, gamers command the armies of the Roman Empire and suppress the rebellion in Asia. Gameplay consists of forming and advancing military units (a maximum of 20 units may exist at any time), disbanding units, sailing the Mediterranean in search of new lands, building (and destroying) fortresses, coliseums, ships, and shipyards, and much more. There are 15 different stages to conquer, and the view is of an isometric grid map augmented by windows (menu, options, commands, messages, etc.) and story-based cut scenes. Strategic maneuvering and planning are keys to winning battles against the armies of Arabia, Egypt, and Persia. Modes of play include: Campaign, One Player, and Two Player.

Warsong

Publisher: Treco. Developer: NCS/Cube.
Strategy Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

The only game in the Japanese *Langrisser* series to be released in America, *Warsong* stars Prince Garrett, who must lead his armies against the Dalsis Empire to retrieve a sacred sword. Garrett controls a party of commanders who hire up to eight different army units consisting of soldiers, archers, horsemen, mermen, griffons, monks, and citizens, each with different strengths and weaknesses. Only commanders can use fireballs, tornadoes, healing spells, and other magic. There are 20 turn-based scenarios, each played out on a grid map of varying terrain. Combat switches the game to a

side-view perspective, where players are mere onlookers.

Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA

All-Stars

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive. Developer: Time Warner Interactive. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Endorsed by “The Great One,” *Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars* offers four standard modes of play: Exhibition, Practice, Tournament, and Season. In addition, there’s a Just Play option, which takes impatient gamers straight to the action (the computer automatically picks the teams). Players from 32 NHL teams/cities are represented, but official team names and logos are absent. Players are rated according to speed, shooting accuracy, toughness, and offensive and defensive awareness, and their stats are based on the 1993–94 NHL season. The 30-degree side-view (horizontally scrolling) perspective depicts large, nice looking skaters. Other features and options include: player trades; three play styles (defensive, aggressive, roughest); three-on-three capabilities; arcade- and simulation-style play (the latter featuring more penalties called); adjustable team names and colors; video clips of penalties and goals; and lots of fighting. Also released for the SNES.

Wayne’s World

Publisher: T*HQ. Developer: Gray Matter. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

One of the worst games in the system’s library, *Wayne’s World* for the Genesis is based on the 1992 movie starring *Saturday Night Live* alumni Mike Myers and Dana Carvey. Players guide Wayne (“Party time! Excellent!”) through a music shop, a nightclub, a donut shop, and suburbia (complete with floating houses), using a guitar weapon to shoot such enemies as bagpipes, disco balls, garbage cans, and spewing coffee cups. Shooting and jumping (over electric wiring, onto speakers, and the like) is pretty much all there is to do, and both actions are poorly programmed. The game is plagued by blind jumps, cheap deaths, terrible level design, inaccurate collision detection,

shoddy controls, gratingly repetitive sounds, and more. Also released for the GB, NES, and SNES.

WeaponLord

Publisher: Namco Hometek. Developer: Visual Concepts. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

A notoriously bloody one-on-one fighting game, *WeaponLord* lets players select from seven different muscle-bound barbarians, each of whom is outfitted with weaponry (such as a guillotine, a talon blade, or a demon axe) and 10 different special moves, including death combos for decapitations and disembowelments. Modes of play include: Story, Arcade, and Versus. Like the slightly more colorful (but equal in most other respects) SNES version of the game, *WeaponLord* for the Genesis was compatible with the XBAND Network, meaning gamers anywhere could compete against one another via modem. The one advantage the Genesis game has over its SNES counterpart is compatibility with Sega’s six-button controller.

Wheel of Fortune

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Imagitec Design. Game Show, 1–3 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on the Merv Griffin Enterprises TV game show, *Wheel of Fortune* for the Genesis features Vanna White (who turns the letters, of course) and more than 4,500 new puzzles. As play begins, gamers are shown a wall of hidden letters (blank boxes) spelling out a word or words from such categories as person, place, or thing. To guess a consonant in the puzzle, players spin a wheel, hoping that the wheel lands on a dollar amount or a free spin (as opposed to bankrupt or miss a turn). Unlike the SNES version, which goes to a separate screen showing a large wheel, only a small portion of the wheel is shown. Players can choose to buy a vowel in lieu of guessing a consonant, or they can bypass the wheel altogether and attempt to solve the puzzle. A bonus round at the end of each two-out-of-three match lets the winner compete for a prize. Includes voice effects and six different contestants. Fans of the show will

love this interactive version of the game. Also released for the NES, Sega CD (enhanced by 6,000 puzzles, CD quality theme music, and video footage of Vanna White), and numerous other systems. Followed by: *Wheel of Fortune: Deluxe Edition* (SNES) and other sequels.

Where in the World is Carmen

Sandiego?

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts Canada. Educational/Geography/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Packaged with a paperback copy of *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (a resource necessary for playing the game well), *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* for the Genesis is based on the 1986 Broderbund computer semi-classic, which began on the Commodore 64 and spawned a PBS game show. After being given a mission (usually recovering a stolen object, such as Caesar's crown) and a few hints, players must explore cities, go inside buildings, obtain an arrest warrant, and interrogate witnesses to gather clues (such as the suspect's appearance, location, and hobbies), all in the name of tracking down and capturing a criminal. If time runs out or the player tries to apprehend the crook without obtaining the proper warrant, the suspect will go free. The game can be played in five languages and features digitized graphics, hundreds of cases, and briefings on geography and culture around the globe. Also released for the SMS and SNES.

Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Electronic Arts Canada. Educational/Geography/Adventure, 1 player. 1992.

Packaged with a paperback copy of *The New American Desk Encyclopedia*, *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?* finds the titular thief and her Villains' International League of Evil traveling through time, stealing history's treasures. To save the day (or at least the artifacts), players will talk to witnesses and informers, gather clues, and track down Carmen and her 15 criminal cohorts. When closing in on a suspect, players can sic the Capture Robot on them, but it is important to have the proper

arrest warrant prior to doing so. To travel through time, players use a "chronoskimmer." The game can be played in five languages and features 1500 years of history, 12 countries, more than 1200 clues, and a variety of historic events, inventions, and people. Also released for the NES and SNES.

Whip Rush

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Vic Tokai. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

This mediocre game puts players in the titular vehicle, a 23rd century jet fighter that shoots aliens and can grab a variety of weapon power-ups, including lasers, missiles, power claws, and fire, the latter of which shoots in the opposite direction that players push the d-pad (making for a powerful, but flawed weapon). Getting hit by enemy bullets reduces weapon power, and there are seven labyrinthine levels to blast through. Parallax scrolling is the game's graphical highlight, but the visuals in general are nothing to get excited about. Fans of *R-Type* and *Bio-Hazard Battle* may enjoy *Whip Rush* to some degree.

Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits

Publisher: Williams Entertainment. Digital Eclipse Software. Multi-Game Compilation, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1996.

Despite certain control issues (the d-pad is hardly a worthy substitute for *Robotron's* dual joysticks), this is a solidly programmed compilation of five all-time great arcade games. In *Joust*, flying, running, knight-mounted ostriches battle Buzzard Riders and the occasional pterodactyl by running into them on platform-riddled, non-scrolling playfields (the ostrich must be higher at the point of contact). *Sinistar* is similar to *Asteroids* (rotate, thrust, fire), but with minerals to collect and a scary talking demon to shoot ("Beware, I live" remains intact). *Defender II* (a.k.a. *Stargate*) is the likeminded sequel to *Defender*, which is a wraparound side-scrolling space shooter in which players rescue surface-dwelling humanoids while firing lasers and smart bombs at

bombers, landers, mutants, and other swarming enemies. In *Robotron: 2084*, players—as a stick figure–like human—run around a series of non-scrolling rooms, shooting hordes of robots and rescuing and avoiding shooting innocents. All five titles exemplify the intensely enjoyable action of better games from the early 1980s. Also released for the SNES and game.com. The PlayStation and Saturn versions also include *Bubbles*.

Wimbledon Championship Tennis

Publisher: Sega. Developer: SIMS. Sports/Tennis, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Play singles or doubles on grass, clay, or hard courts in *Wimbledon Championship Tennis*. Players select from 24 “world class” (i.e. fictional) male and female tennis players, each with varying abilities in backhand, court coverage, forehand, serve, and volley. There are 10 different skill levels, meaning everyone from beginners to tennis pros will be able to compete in Exhibition or Tournament play. The elevated view is from behind one end of the court, and the ball can be hit into the net (prompting a girl in green to run out and retrieve the ball) and bounce off the top of the net, helping make an already great game feel realistic. Nice graphics give the game a sense of visual depth. As the ball gets higher above the court, scaling makes it look cartoonishly large. Top-notch sound effects and spot-on controls add to the fun.

Wings of Wor

Publisher: DreamWorks. Developer: NCS/Cube. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

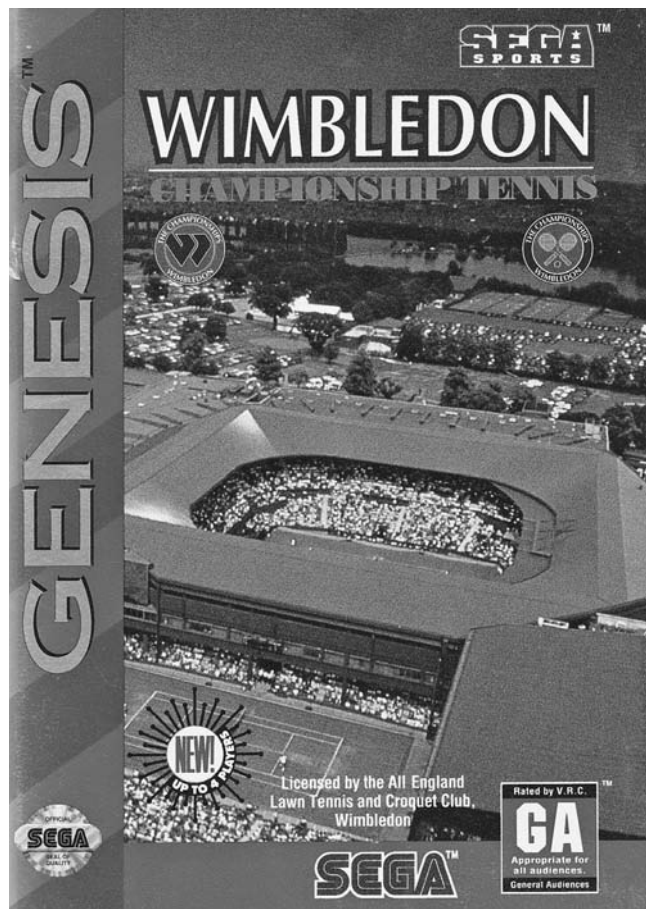
Dispensing with the sci-fi setting found in most shooters, *Wings of Wor* is a dark, horror-themed game where players guide a winged man through hordes of hellish, mutated creatures and

huge, grotesque bosses (including man/machine hybrids). Grapping orbs increases the spread and strength of Wor’s weapon and enables it to fire to the rear. Feathers act as speed boosts while letter-coded scrolls provide lighting attacks, a pair of orbiting angels (shields), and other magic-based weapons. Level design is largely mundane, but the bosses really stand out. There are six levels of play and four difficulty levels.

Winter Challenge

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: MindSpan Technologies. Sports/Olympics, 1–10 players (alternating). 1992.

Adapted from 1991’s *The Games: Winter Challenge* (PC, Commodore Amiga), *Winter*



Like many Genesis sports titles, *Wimbledon Championship Tennis* offers four-player simultaneous action.

Challenge lets Genesis owners compete in eight Olympic-style events: Biathlon, Bobsled, Cross Country Skiing, Downhill, Giant Slalom, Luge, Ski Jump, Speed Skating, and Slalom. Depending on the event, players must tap buttons rapidly, pace the run correctly, aim the shot accurately, find the fastest trajectory, and/or time things precisely. As with *Summer Games*, The third-person view is from behind the competitor, supplemented by a window on the left side of the screen showing an overhead perspective. Up to 10 players can select from several options, including character creation (name, country, and portrait) and three difficulty levels: Amateur, Professional, and World Class. Modes of play include Training and Tournament. Other features include: digitized sound effects; VCR-style instant replays; and a memory chip for saving tournaments in progress and high scores.

Winter Olympic Games

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex Design Studios. Sports/Olympics, 1-4 players (alternating, 2-player simultaneous). 1994.

This cartridge, which is called "The XVII Olympic Winter Games: Lillehammer 1994" on the title screen, lets players compete in the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Games, with each event featuring actual courses from said Winter Games. Events include: Biathlon, Speed Skating, Bobsleigh, Downhill, Ski Jump, Super G, Freestyle Moguls, Luge, Giant Slalom, and Slalom. Up to four players compete against one another, or against actual Olympic Game records. As in *Track & Field*, rapid button-pressing is important, but there are more nuanced controls as well, such as the timing of button presses and using the d-pad to steer in the Bobsleigh event. Sixteen different countries are represented, and players can select from eight languages and three difficulty levels: club, national, and Olympic. Includes opening and closing ceremonies. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES.

Wiz 'n' Liz

Publisher: Psygnosis. Developer: Raising Hell Productions. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Published by the creators of *Lemmings*, *Wiz 'n' Liz* is a fun, highly original game. As one of the titular wizards, players run and jump around a variety of themed levels (desert, snow, mine, and the like), rescuing "wabbits." Running into the little bunnies releases an item, such as a star, a letter, or fruit, the latter of which can be mixed to create a variety of benefits, including extra time, a fruit store, level skips, and mini-games reminiscent of such classics as *Pong*, *Snafu*, and *Breakout*. Saving all the wabbits opens a door to the next level. There are 56 levels in all.

Wolfchild

Publisher: JVC. Developer: Core Design. Side-Scrolling Combat/Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Scientist Kal Morrow has been kidnapped by Karl Draxx and the terrorist group, Chimera. To rescue his brilliant father, Saul Morrow turns himself into a lycanthropic warrior and runs, jumps, punches, and shoots his way through nine labyrinthine levels, including a cruiser, a jungle, a lost temple, and biogenetic labs. While in human form, Saul can only use his fists, but as the Wolfchild he can shoot unlimited fireblasts and grab the following power-ups: double fireblasts, arc blasts, flamers, homers (homing missiles), plasma balls, three-way bullets, and boomers (boomerangs). The game has a distinctly 8-bit look, but it fares pretty well in the action department. The Sega CD version is similar, but has 10 levels, slightly better graphics, a new soundtrack, and a fully animated introductory sequence. Also released for the Game Gear and SNES.

Wolverine: Adamantium Rage

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Teeny Weeny Games. Side-Scrolling Combat/Adventure, 1 player. 1994.

To uncover secrets of his mysterious past, Marvel Comics' popular mutant Wolverine must work his way through seven areas: The Secret [Weapon X] Laboratory (corridors, platforms, and doorways); A Chill is in the Air (icy wasteland, rocky caverns); Fury in the

[Canadian] Forest; Lunar Hallucinations (a hallucinatory nightmare world); Into the Inner Circle (where the evil Shinobi Shaw awaits); Descent into the Dungeon; and In the Sewers Beneath New York City. In addition to facing such enemies and obstacles as armed guards, robotic guns, crocodiles, electrified doors, pitfalls, and toxic waste, Wolverine must battle Lady Deathstrike, Sabretooth, and other super-villains. The Clawed Curmudgeon can perform a variety claw, pounce, slash, and spike attacks, along with running, jumping, crouching, and climbing. Wolvie can also roll like Samus Aran of *Metroid* fame. In fact, the large, non-linear levels (which are timed) evoke those of *Metroid* to some degree. The game also has puzzle elements in which Wolverine must activate switches. Also released for the SNES.

Wonder Boy in Monster World

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Westone. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

In *Wonder Boy in Monster World*, players guide a young man named Shion as he attempts to fend off an invading army of monsters. Shion runs, jumps on platforms, and swings his sword at monsters, but the game is infused with such RPG elements as a pull down menu, attack points, hit points, talking to townsfolk to glean information, and shopping for armor, shields, weapons, boots (for varying jumping and speed abilities), and six types of magic, including fire storm, thunder, and quake. Various items can also be acquired by defeating enemies and opening treasure chests. Predating *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* by seven years, the cartridge even lets gamers play an ocarina (to open doors). Environments include islands, villages, castles, forests, deserts, ice, cloud cities, and under the sea. Animation is limited, but cute, anime-style graphics, charming music, and solid gameplay make the game worth checking out. The fifth title in the series, *Wonder Boy in Monster World* is preceded by: *Wonder Boy*, *Wonder Boy in Monster Land*, and *Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap* for the Master System; and *Monster Lair* for the TurboGrafx-CD.

World Championship Soccer

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Soccer, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

Viewed from directly above the vertical-scrolling action, *World Championship Soccer* features 24 international teams (selectable via a world map), each of which is rated according to speed, skill, defense, and goal-keeping abilities. Each team has 16 players (gamers select 11 for their starting lineup), each of whom is rated according to speed, kicking strength, tackling strength, and accuracy. A small radar screen (which is largely useless) gives players an overview of the entire field. As in real World Cup soccer, there are steals, slide tackles, bicycle kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins goal kicks, ground passes, and high passes (scaling and a shadow appear as the ball rises). Unfortunately, the game lacks substitutions, penalties, free kicks, and offsides. If a game ends in a tie in the Final Tournament, a penalty kick contest will decide the outcome, meaning there is no overtime. Player sprites are large, but gameplay is slow. A system launch title.

World Championship Soccer II

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

World Championship Soccer II is an improvement over the original game. New features include: headers; faster gameplay; better animation; goal replays; penalties; penalty cards; penalty kicks during games (as opposed to only after a Final Tournament tie); a four-player mode (via multi-tap adapter); three levels of difficulty; and 32 selectable teams (as opposed to 24). The overhead, vertical-scrolling view has been replaced by an angled, side-scrolling look at the field and players, giving the game an effective (if grainy), pseudo-3D appearance. Modes of play include: Exhibition, Challenge Game, and World Tournament. Although *WCS II* is better than its progenitor, most fans of the sport will prefer *FIFA International Soccer*.

World Class LeaderBoard Golf

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex

Design Studios. Sports/Golf, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1992.

World Class LeaderBoard Golf includes three authentic courses—Florida’s Doral Country Club, Texas’ Cypress Creek, and Scotland’s St. Andrews—plus a fictional course called the Gauntlet, which is recommended for experienced players. Weather conditions, lakes, trees, roughs, and sand traps characterize each course. Prior to making an 18-hole commitment, gamers can brush up on their skills via practice greens and a driving range. The behind-the-golfer main view is supplemented by a narrow strip along the right side of the screen giving an overhead look at the hole. Using a circular meter, players determine the power and accuracy of their swing, and a caddie is on hand to help with club selection. Fourteen competition formats are available, including: Matchplay, Foursomes, Skins, Best Ball, Medal Play, and 48-player Tournament. Adapted from the Access Software computer game (*World Class Leader Board*), *World Class LeaderBoard Golf* lets players turn the digitized speech on or off, but has no real players and no way to save progress. Also released for the Game Gear.

World Cup USA 94

Publisher: U.S. Gold. Developer: Tiertex Design Studios. Sports/Soccer, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A fast-paced soccer title (too fast, in fact), *World Cup USA 94* offers 24 selectable teams, VCR-style instant replays, an overhead view of a vertically scrolling field (depicting small, poorly animated players), and a radar screen that shows where all the players are on the field at all times (which helps gamers aim passes). Official licensing gives the game usage of Striker, the dog mascot of the 1994 World Cup. Striker is certainly cartoon-like and cute, but he’s used as an icon in the text-starved selection screens, meaning you’ll have to refer to the manual to tell what each Striker stance means (an annoyance to be sure). The hectic, hyperactive gameplay is frequently frustrating (the computer is really good at stealing the ball, for example), robbing the game of any subtlety and

players of any strategic planning. Lame graphics don’t help. Soccer fans should stick with the vastly superior *FIFA* series.

World Heroes

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Fighting, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The brilliant Dr. Linus Fracas has used his time machine to transport nine of the world’s greatest warriors to compete in a tournament. Each fighter can punch, kick, crouch, jump, and do somersaults, and some can wield such weapons as throwing stars or swords. In addition, each character has his or her own special moves, such as fire dragon (an aerial kick), shoulder ram (attack that hits like an avalanche), or fire ball (fire leaps from a crystal ball for a searing attack). Fighters range in style from a Japanese ninja named Fuuma to a mysterious unnamed alien to a Russian dancing madman magician named Rasputin. In Championship Match mode, mines, spikes, fire, and other obstacles play an important role, helping distance the game somewhat from its *Street Fighter II* roots. *World Heroes* is a sadly underpowered (slow gameplay, garbled voices) port of the 1992 Alpha Denshi arcade/Neo Geo game. Better versions exist for the SNES and Neo Geo CD. The first sequel, *World Heroes 2*, hit the SNES, but not the Genesis. Other sequels and offshoots followed, including *World Heroes Jet* (arcade/Neo Geo, GB), *World Heroes Perfect* (arcade/Neo Geo, Neo Geo CD), and *World Heroes Anthology* (PS2), the latter of which includes faithful arcade ports of *World Heroes*, *World Heroes 2*, *World Heroes Jet*, and *World Heroes Perfect*.

World of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Sega. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

In *World of Illusion*, players guide Mickey Mouse through five short, beatable levels filled with magic, adventure, and cartoon-like detail. Each level offers something different as Mickey braves the Enchanted Forest, takes a magic carpet ride Among the Clouds, swims in

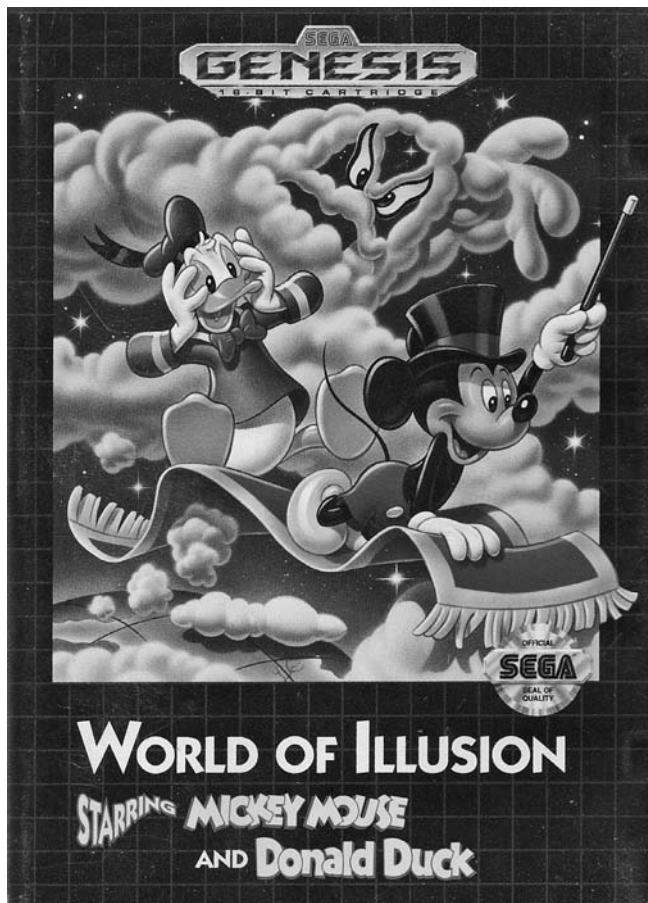
the Underwater Adventure, dodges dangers in The Library, and navigates mazes and battles the Magic Master in The Magic Box. Mickey wields a whip-like magic cape to hit such enemies as spiders, a shark, and playing cards. Mickey can also bounce on springy staplers, ride on a ruler, dodge vultures and cyclones, and much more. *World of Illusion* is actually three adventures in one as selecting Donald as the playable character changes the game, and the two-player mode has Mickey and Donald cooperating (such as operating a mine cart together) in order to progress through the levels. Minnie Mouse, Daisy Duck, Goofy, Pluto, Clarabelle Cow, and Huey, Dewey, and Louie make cameo appearances. The follow-up to the great *Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse*,

World of Illusion doesn't quite live up to its predecessor, but it's a fine game nevertheless.

World Series Baseball

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

A game for serious hardball enthusiasts, *World Series Baseball* features all 28 Major League teams (in the then-new six-division alignment), all 28 Major League stadiums, all 700 Major League players (including such stars as Kirby Puckett, Roger Clemens, and Tony Gwynn), and battery-backed, 162-game seasonal play (less devoted players can opt for 13, 26, or 52 games). The game, which has realistic graphics and sounds, also includes saveable stats, Exhibition play, Batting Practice, Home Run Derby mode, and play-by-play commentary (à la the more arcade-like, but less verbose *Sports Talk Baseball*). Further distinguishing the game is its innovative viewpoint, which is from the perspective of the catcher (providing a nice view of the strike zone), and its unusual, strategic pitching mechanic in which players position a ball cursor and select pitching type and speed before the computer takes over and throws the ball. Batters aim at pitches using a cursor, and players can select between power and contact hitting. Also released for the Game Gear and Saturn.



World of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck is shorter and easier than most platformers of its type, but it is a fun game.

World Series Baseball '95

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Like its well-received progenitor (*World Series Baseball*), *World Series Baseball '95* includes all 28 Major League teams and all 700 Major League players. Plus,

the perspective (from the catcher's viewpoint) while the player pitches the ball and swings the bat remains the same. Additions to the formula include: the ability to draft and trade players; the inclusion of all-time greats (including such legends as Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb); an All-Star Game based on player performance during the season; more detailed stadiums (the Kaufmann Stadium waterfalls look especially nice); superior animation; and better, more colorful player graphics. The batting cursor is now a rectangle (as opposed to a circle). To pitch the ball, players must select the type of the pitch, select the speed of the pitch, and aim a ball cursor over the plate, letting the computer follow through with the actual throw. Modes of play include: Season, Home Run Derby, Classic Home Run Derby, Exhibition, Playoffs, and Batting Practice. Also released for the Game Gear. Released the same year as *World Series Baseball Starring Deion Sanders* for the 32X.

World Series Baseball '96

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1996.

Worlds Series Baseball '96 offers virtually nothing new to what gamers already had in *World Series '95*: same catcher's perspective while swinging the bat and throwing the ball; same $\frac{3}{4}$ perspective once the ball gets hit into play; same overall look — same, same, same. Sure, the rosters, statistics, and schedule have been updated, but that's about it. For posterity's sake, there is one new feature that is barely worth mentioning: post-season awards for the top five offensive and top four pitching categories.

World Series Baseball 98

Publisher: Sega. Developer: BlueSky Software. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1997.

Like *World Series Baseball '96*, *World Series Baseball 98* (note the dropped apostrophe) is virtually identical to *World Series Baseball '95*, but with updated stats, rosters, and scheduling. Incidentally, there was no "World Series Baseball '97." Also released for the Saturn.

Followed by: *World Series Baseball 2K1* (DC), *World Series Baseball 2K2* (DC), and *World Series Baseball 2K3* (PS2, Xbox).

World Trophy Soccer

Publisher: Virgin Games. Developer: Krisalis Software. Sports/Soccer, 1–8 players (2-player simultaneous). 1992.

Viewed from an overhead perspective that's angled to show a side-view of the players, *World Trophy Soccer* is played on a large, scrolling, horizontal field. Gamers can play a solo match against the computer or a friend, or compete for the World Trophy via a Tournament mode designed for up to eight players. The winner of the tournament gets to play for the Soccer Cup in a one-game match against a new team chosen at random by the computer. There are 32 international teams from which to choose, along with three difficulty levels (easy, normal, and hard) and 10 match lengths: 4, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, and 90 minutes. Gamers can also make substitutions, select uniform colors, and perform such standard soccer moves as headers, lob kicks, free kicks, goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins, steals, and sliding tackles.

WWF Raw

Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Wrestling, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1994.

The follow-up to *WWF Royal Rumble*, *WWF Raw* improves upon the formula with four-player simultaneous action, faster gameplay, and differing attributes for each wrestler (including speed, weight, and grappling ability). Wrestlers include: Bret "Hit Man" Hart, Razor Ramon, Luna Vachon, Lex Luger, 1-2-3 Kid, Doink, Diesel, Shawn Michaels, Owen Hart, Yokozuna, Bam Bam Bigelow, and The Undertaker, each with his own theme music and over-the-top "mega moves" (which are secret like the special moves in many fighting games). In addition, each wrestler can punch, kick, climb turnbuckles, perform clotheslines, do dropkicks, knock out the ref, hit the other player with a chair, and more. Modes of play include: One-on-One, Tag Team, Survivor

Series, Royal Rumble, Match, Rematch, Bedlam (fight two wrestlers at once), and Raw Endurance Match (six opponents consecutively). The 32X version has slightly upgraded graphics and sounds. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES.

WWF Royal Rumble

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Wrestling, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

This sequel to *WWF Super WrestleMania* features 12 pro wrestlers: Hulk Hogan, Crush, IRS, Papa Shango, Bret “Hitman” Hart, Lex Luger, Randy “Macho Man” Savage, The Undertaker, Shawn Michaels, Razor Ramon, Rick Martel, and Hacksaw Jim Duggan, each accompanied by digital photos, and each with his own special moves. The action is “no-holds-barred,” meaning players can execute vicious chokeholds, awful eye-gouges, and back-breaking chair-slams (leaving the ring and throwing wrestlers out of the ring are allowed). Naturally, there are plenty of standard moves as well, such as punches, kicks, grapples (which are essentially button-mashing contests), dropkicks, clotheslines, atomic drops, and flying elbow drops. Modes of play include: One-on-One (Brawl and Tournament), Tag Team, Triple Tag Team, and Royal Rumble, the latter of which lets up to six wrestlers enter the ring at once. The Super Nintendo version of *WWF Royal Rumble* adds Mr. Perfect, Ted DiBiase, Yokozuna, Ric Flair, and Tatanka, but leaves out Hulk Hogan, Rick Martel, Jim Dugan, IRS, and Papa Shango. Also released for the Dreamcast.

WWF Super WrestleMania

Publisher: Flying Edge. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Wrestling, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

The follow-up to *WWF WrestleMania* (NES) and the precursor to *WWF Royal Rumble* and *WWF Raw*, *WWF Super WrestleMania* lets players select from eight World Wrestling Federation stars, each of whom is accompanied by a digitized photo, and each of whom has a signature move: Hulk Hogan (legdrop); Papa

Shango (Shoulderbreaker); “Macho Man” Randy Savage (flying elbowdrop); Ultimate Warrior (flying clothesline); British Bulldog (powerslam); IRS (write-off); Ted DiBiase (million dollar dream); and Shawn Michaels (side suplex). In addition, each wrestler can throw his opponent out of the ring, climb the turnbuckles, and pull off such standard moves as punches, kicks, aerial attacks, head butts, and stomps. Modes of play include: One-on-One, Tag Team, 4-on-4 Survivor Series, and Ultimate Tournament Match. The elevated view is from the side, with the screen scrolling left and right to show the entire ring. The graphically superior SNES version has a different mix of 10 fighters, including Sid Justice and The Undertaker.

WWF WrestleMania: The Arcade Game

Publisher: Acclaim. Developer: Sculptured Software. Sports/Wrestling, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

A port of Midway’s *WWF WrestleMania* (arcade, 1995), *WWF WrestleMania: The Arcade Game* is, of course, a wrestling title, but it plays more like a fighting game. The bombastic action is amped up with combos, fast gameplay, digitized fighters (à la *Mortal Kombat*), and such arcade-style “mayhem moves” as the tombstone slam and the shocking hand buzzer. Standard moves include reversals, head slams, piledrivers, super clotheslines, flying dropkicks, and more. Players can even climb the turnbuckle and take the brawl outside of the ring. There are eight professional wrestlers to fight as or against: Doink, Razor Ramon, Bret “Hit Man” Hart, Shawn Michaels, The Undertaker, Yokozuna, Bam Bam Bigelow, and Lex Luger. The challenge is to win the Intercontinental Championship or the World Wrestling Federation Championship, which comprise a variety of scenarios, including one-on-one, one-on-two, one-on-three, and two-on-two bouts. Button-mashing helps players get off the ropes or up off the mat. Vince McMahon provides play-by-play commentary. Also released for the 32X, SNES (minus Yokozuna and Bam Bam Bigelow), PSX, and Saturn.

X-Men

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Western Technologies. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Magneto has infected the X-Men's training facility, the Danger Room, with a computer virus, bringing its holographic enemies to deadly life. Playing as Cyclops (optic blasts), Gambit (energy card projectiles), Nightcrawler (teleportation), or Wolverine (adamantium claws), gamers must battle their way through six Danger Room combat zones: the Savage Land, the Shi'ar Empire, Excalibur's Lighthouse, Ahab's Future World, Mojo's Crunch, and Asteroid M, punching, kicking, slashing, and using a character-specific power on such enemies as leopardmen, giant bees, soldiers, Sentinels, and other enemies (including supervillains Juggernaut, Mojo, Deathbird, and Sabretooth). Each level has traps and obstacles, such as spikes, pitfalls, electricity, and toxic ooze, along with such puzzle elements as hidden passages, obscured platforms, levers to pull, and keys to turn off devices. Each time an X-Man dies, players select one of the other four to take his place. In addition, non-playable X-Men Archangel, Jean Grey, Iceman, and Storm lend a helping hand. The sound effects are annoying, and the music is nothing special, but the game looks and plays pretty well (despite a frustratingly high level of difficulty). Based on the popular Marvel Comics team of mutant super-heroes.

X-Men 2: Clone Wars

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Headgames. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1995.

Before you even get to the title screen, *X-Men 2* drops you smack-dab in the middle of a snowstorm, fighting for your life. Gamers play as Beast, Cyclops, Gambit, Nightcrawler, Psylocke, or Wolverine, each of whom can pull off such moves as punch, kick, slash, spin jump, and wall climb, and each outfitted with special mutant powers, such as Cyclops's optic blasts or Psylocke's psychic knife. Even Magneto, who controls magnetic fields and blasts magnetic energy, is a playable character. Un-

like *X-Men*, this sequel offers unlimited usage of special powers. Also, the characters are larger, and the graphics in general are much better — this is a gorgeous game. Clone War missions include: Siberia (brave radioactive barrels and driving blizzards); The Sentinels (battle defenders of the Sentinel manufacturing plant); Avalon (rescue Magneto); Apocalypse's Fortress (fight off attacking Tusks and Tuskettes); Savage Land (invade flooding forest, defeat Brain Child); and The Phalanx Mothership (destroy cloning factory guarded by Deathbird, Cameron Hodge, Brood, and Brood Queen). Like *X-Men*, this game is very difficult, but enjoyable.

X-Perts

Publisher: Deep Water. Developer: Abalone Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1996.

An offshoot of Sega's *Eternal Champions*, *X-Perts* is a confusing mess of a game in which characters move awkwardly and controls operate with considerable lag time. Terrorists have assumed control of an underwater weapons facility, threatening to detonate a deadly thermonuclear device. This prompts the U.N. to call in former Black Orchid gang member Shadow Yamato (misspelled in-game as "Yamoto"), computer programmer Zachary Taylor, and robotics engineer Tashile Claudel. Each X-Pert is selectable during the action, and each has different attacks, weapons, technical skills (including hacking computers and programming robots), and kill and torture moves, the latter used for pumping information out of bad guys. In addition to punching, kicking, shooting, and otherwise harming enemies, players must perform such tasks as rerouting power, purging files, accessing files, and gaining security codes, adding adventure and strategy to the combative action. Characters and backgrounds are pre-rendered in 3D, but there is no music to speak of.

Ys III: Wanderers from Ys

Publisher: Renovation Products. Developer: Riot. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1991.

The follow-up to *Y's The Vanished Omens* (SMS) and *Y's Book I & II* (TurboGrafx-CD), *Y's III* turns the series inside out by changing the formula from overhead to side-view perspective. Also, the swordplay is more visceral and action-oriented, the protagonist can jump, and players can use magical rings for shields, healing, invincibility, increased attack power, and forcing enemies to move in slow motion. Battle accoutrements consist of a sword (short, long, broad, banded, or flame), armor (leather, chain mail, plate mail, banded, or battle), and shields (wood, small, large, banded, or battle). Gameplay is comprised of exploring a haunted coal mine, the heart of an active volcano, the top of a blizzard swept peak, and other areas, along with battling monsters, gaining experience, grabbing gold, opening doors with keys, using items to solve puzzles, and more. Dramatic music and nice graphics complement the RPG action. Also released for the SNES and TurboGrafx-16 CD. Followed by: *Y's VI: The Ark of Napishtim* (PS2).

Zany Golf

Publisher: Electronic Arts. Developer: Sandcastle Productions. Sports/Miniature Golf, 1–4 players (alternating). 1990.

Originally a computer game (*Will Harvey's Zany Golf*), *Zany Golf* features nine holes of fun (if unorthodox) miniature golf: Wacky Windmill, Hamburger Hill, Will's Walls, Pinball Palace, Frantic Fans, Chaotic Castle, Ambling Ant Hill, Knock-Out, Nightmare, and Energy Enigma. Since the game lacks mouse control, the Magic Carpet hole from Will Harvey's computer classic is absent. Players can scope out the layout of each hole, and the computer provides instructions, hints, and bonuses. Puzzles, pinball, barrier knock-outs, laser beams, and other such elements come into play, meaning the game lives up to its title. Viewed from an isometric perspective.

Zero: The Kamikazee Squirrel

Publisher: Sunsoft. Developer: Iguana Entertainment. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1994.

An offshoot of the *Aero the Acrobat* series, *Zero: The Kamikazee Squirrel* casts former villain Zero in the role of hero. Like Sonic the Hedgehog, who inspired so many attitudinal platform characters, the jeans- and bandana-wearing Zero runs, jumps (including double jumps), and flips his way through a variety of colorful worlds, including a beach, caves, and the forest. Zero can also throw shurikens, lash out with nunchakus, swoop like a super-hero, fly via jetpack, and perform super dives. In addition, he drives a jet ski and a speed boat, both of which are side-scrolling fun. Zero's mission is to defeat Jacques Le Sheets, an evil lumberjack trying to cut down an entire forest. Enemies to dispense with include gunmen, beanie cap-wearing baddies, and an assortment of oddball creatures. This entertaining game has more than its share of blind jumps and other cheap deaths, but lots of extra lives and unlimited continues make it easily beatable. Rated MA-13, *Zero* is one of the edgier platformers of the era. Also released for the SNES.

Zero Tolerance

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Technopop. First-Person Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1994.

Zero Tolerance is a rarity: a gun-based (as opposed to ship-based) first-person shooter (FPS) on a 16-bit system. The 360-degree scrolling environment lets players walk around the maze-like passageways of a defense colony, shooting alien terrorists (preferably all of them). In addition to a standard handgun, players can pick up bazookas, laser guns, grenades, shotguns, and other weapons. The action takes place in eight multi-segmented areas: Bridge, Docking Bay, Engineering, Greenhouse, High Rise, High Rise Rooftop, Space Station, and Sub-Basement. Due to technological limitations, the playfield only takes up 1/3rd or so of the screen (mapping, inventory, and the like comprises the rest), and the rooms and hallways have no ceilings to speak of. However, the game does have some cool visual effects, including *Doom*-like doors to open and blood dripping down walls. Interestingly, *Zero Tolerance* supports a link cable, which allows for

simultaneous death matches. Unfortunately, you'd need two TV sets, two Genesis consoles, and two *Zero Tolerance* cartridges to play it this way.

Zombies Ate My Neighbors

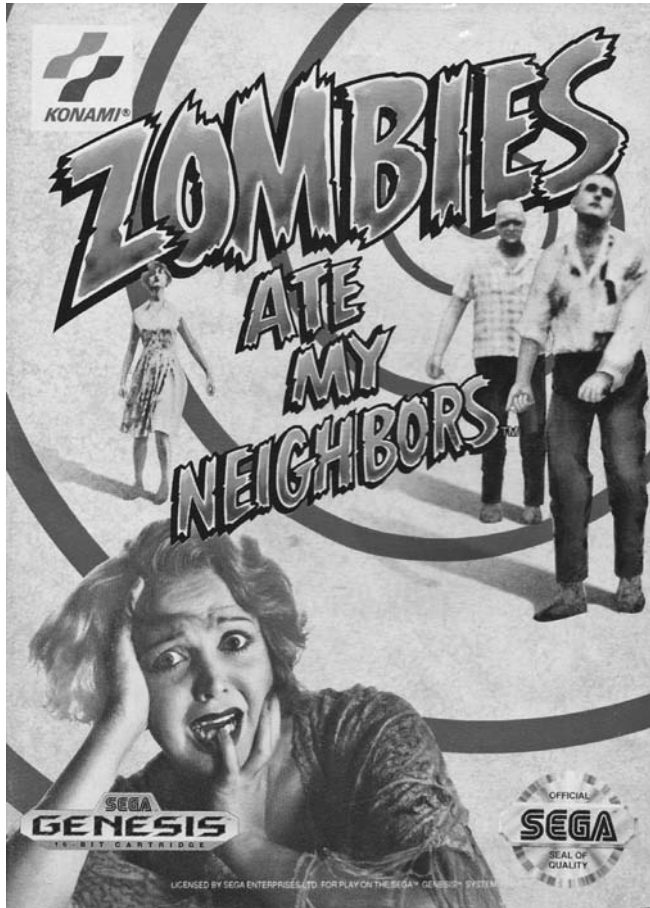
Publisher: Konami. Developer: LucasArts. Overhead View Action, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

A scrolling, more methodical (though still quickly paced) take on such games as *Robotron* and *Smash T.V.*, *Zombies Ate My Neighbors* is a bona fide cult classic, with players, as either Zeke or Julie (both teenagers), running around suburbia, using a squirt gun to battle such creepy creatures as blobs, mummies, Martians, pod plants, vampires, evil dolls, lizard men, giant ants, and, of course, zombies. There are also keys for opening doors, potions for powering up, innocents to rescue (such as tourists and cheerleaders), and weapons to find, including bazookas, footballs, uzi squirt guns, exploding soda pop, and weed wackers. The game features 55 monstrous levels, each with a fun theme, such as a grocery store gone bad, a mysterious island, Mars Needs Cheerleaders, and Dances With Werewolves. Yes, film and monster references abound, as does a heaping helping of tongue-in-cheek humor. Not only is *Zombies Ate My Neighbors* a blast to play, it's a lighthearted, highly welcome nod to B-movie cinema. Also released for the SNES.

Zool: Ninja of the Nth Dimension

Publisher: GameTek. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

Adapted from the computer game of the same name, *Zool* is a *Sonic the Hedgehog*-influenced platformer that sends players careen-



Zombies Ate My Neighbors pays highly playable homage to B-movie cinema.

ing through seven large, colorful worlds, shooting energy bolts at, jumping on, sliding into, and otherwise battling drums, radios, apples, candy, bananas, bumblebees, and other such cartoonish enemies. Zool has a nifty spinning attack and can even increase his firepower with a spectral body double. He also collects items and must find the exit in each level. Enemies frequently pop up unexpectedly, making them frustratingly tough to anticipate, especially since Zool runs so fast. Also released for the GB, GG, and SNES. Followed by: *Zool 2* (Jaguar).

Zoom!

Publisher: Sega. Developer: Discovery Cyclone System/Sigma Pro-Tech. Maze, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1989.

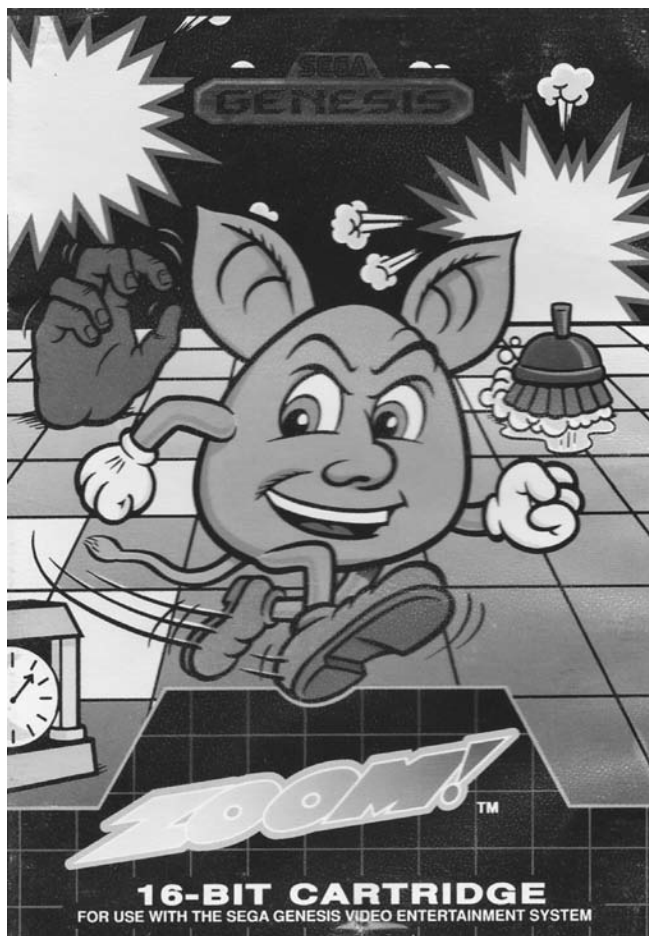
Zoom! is similar to *Amidar* (Atari 2600) and *Pepper II* (ColecoVision), but with pseudo-3D playfields. Gamers guide Mr. Smart as he skates around squares on a grid, enclosing each square by skating around all four sides. Enclosing all the squares on a grid progresses the game to the next of 36 grids. Naturally, a variety of enemies impede Mr. Smart's progress, slowing him down, erasing his work, and otherwise getting in the way. Fortunately, there're help-

ful items (suns, wings, stars, bananas, and the like) for speed boosts, eliminating enemies, freezing enemies, and more.

Zoop

Publisher: Viacom New Media. Developer: Panelcomp. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1995.

In the *Advance Edition* of the *Digital Press Collector's Guide* (Digital Press, 2004), *Zoop* is referred to as “Cosmic Ark meets Tetris,” and that’s a fairly apt description of this time-draining puzzler. In a square in the center of the playfield, gamers guide a triangle that shoots up, down, right, and left at randomly appearing rows of colored shapes that advance from the outer edges of the screen. Shooting a shape the same color as the triangle makes the shape disappear (entire rows of the same color can be destroyed at once). Shooting a shape of a different color changes the color of the triangle to the color of the shape that has just been shot, and the shape will stay on the screen and continue advancing. If a shape makes it into the square where the player maneuvers the triangle, the game will end. A frantic, thoroughly enjoyable puzzler, *Zoop* requires lightning fast eyes, reflexes, and thought-processing skills, especially in later stages (there are 99 levels in all). Helping matters somewhat are the following power-ups: line bombs, color bombs, proximity bombs, and bonus springs. Also released for the GB, GG, SNES, PSX, and Jaguar.



Zoom! is a modernized take on such games as *Amidar* (Atari 2600) and *Pepper II* (ColecoVision).

TURBOGRAFX-16

Developed by Hudson Soft and NEC, the PC Engine was released in Japan in October of 1987. It was a rousing success, beating Sega's Mega Drive and Nintendo's Famicom in Japan's console wars of the late 1980s.

In August of 1989, NEC released the PC Engine in America, changing the name to TurboGrafx-16 and putting the system in competition with the Sega Genesis (also released in 1989) and the firmly entrenched Nintendo NES. Unfortunately, the TurboGrafx was soundly beaten in the marketplace by both of those ubiquitous systems, as well as by the Super Nintendo, which quickly passed the TurboGrafx upon release in 1991.

The TurboGrafx-16 was backed by a huge marketing campaign touting it as the cool, next-generation system to own. One commercial, comparing the TurboGrafx to the NES, called it "four times faster" with "almost 10 times as many colors so the arcade-quality graphics are even more intense" (the TurboGrafx is powered by an 8-bit CPU and contains a 16-bit graphics chip that can display 512

colors at once). Despite these claims, the system seemed alien and less-than-accessible to the average American consumer, at least in comparison to the NES and Genesis juggernauts.

According to then-executive vice president of NEC Technologies, Keith Schaefer, as quoted in *High Score! The Illustrated History of Electronic Games* (McGraw-Hill/Osborne, 2002), "Sega Genesis came to market with what I consider to be inferior hardware, but a superior selection of software that was Americanized for the American consumer. TurboGrafx-16 came out with exactly the same software that



While nowhere near as popular as the Genesis or Super Nintendo, the TurboGrafx-16 has a devoted cult following and some excellent games.



TurboGrafx-16 console with controller.

was popular on the PC Engine in Japan. These were not the right games for the American audience.”

Another stumbling block with the TurboGrafx was its lack of a popular console mascot. *Bonk's Adventure*, which is essentially the *Super Mario Bros.* of the TG, is a great game (as is *Bonk's Revenge* and *Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure*), but Bonk himself never came close to endearing himself to the general public the way Nintendo's Mario and Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog did. *Keith Courage in Alpha Zones* was the pack-in game with the system, but it was a mediocre title with a forgettable protagonist.

The TurboGrafx was also the victim of very little in the way of third-party support, since most third-party developers, skeptical of the oddball TurboGrafx and its relatively small user base, devoted their energy and resources to the Genesis, NES, and Super NES. Nintendo's Machiavellian business practices regarding third-party companies played a role as well.

Despite its troubles in the marketplace, the TurboGrafx is a nifty game system that is home to a number of stellar titles. Some of the best shooters of the era were released for the console, including *Blazing Lazers*, *Dragon Spirit*, *Ordyne*, *Raiden*, *R-Type*, the hard-to-find *Magical Chase*, and the must-own *Galaga '90*. Other key titles for the system include

Bomberman, *Bomberman '93*, *The Legendary Axe*, *Legendary Axe II*, *Splatterhouse*, and *Parasol Stars: The Story of Bubble Bobble III*, along with the *Legend of Zelda*-like *Neutopia* and *Neutopia II*.

A quirky and even fascinating console, the TurboGrafx accepts “HuCards” (also called “TurboChips”) instead of ordinary cartridges. HuCards, which are about the size of credit cards (but thicker), are similar to the Sega Card budget titles released for the Master System. The TurboGrafx controller—called the TurboPad—evokes the NES d-pad, but it has a shorter cord and includes a pair of Turbo switches that enable continual firing (or other benefits) in select games.

Unlike most systems, the TurboGrafx only has one controller port. However, a multi-tap peripheral called a Turbo Tap (sold separately) does enable the console to support up to five controllers. Another add-on is the Turbo Booster, which plugs into the rear of the system via an expansion port. The Turbo Booster lets TurboGrafx owners connect the unit to a home audio system, giving the games stereo sound. The Turbo Booster Plus is similar to the Turbo Booster, but adds memory for keeping high scores and saving progress (in certain games).

In Japan in early 1989, NEC released the CD-ROM2 attachment for the PC Engine. This

made the PC Engine the first video game system to use CDs. For the American market and the TurboGrafx, the CD-ROM2 was redesigned and renamed, resulting in the TurboGrafx-CD. Unfortunately, the TurboGrafx-CD debuted with a retail price tag of \$399.99. This high price, combined with poor marketing and lack of third-party support, resulted in a short life for the CD-ROM add-on. (A complete listing of TurboGrafx-CD games is in Appendix IV near the back of this book).

Another interesting product produced by NEC was the TurboExpress (called the PC Engine GT in Japan), a handheld unit that played games designed for the TurboGrafx-16. Released in America in 1991, the TurboExpress beat the Nomad (a handheld system that played Genesis carts) to the market by three years. The TurboExpress was an impressive unit, but it couldn't compete with Nintendo's Game Boy and its huge library of popular titles.

In 1992, NEC relinquished control of the TurboGrafx to TTI (Turbo Technologies, Inc), which released a streamlined combo unit called the TurboDuo (produced in Japan in 1991 as the far more successful PC Engine Duo). Retailing for \$299.99, the TurboDuo was an awesome system, playing both HuCard and CD-ROM titles. Unfortunately, it was bludgeoned in the marketplace by the Genesis and Super NES powerhouses, meaning today the system is tough to find and highly collectible.

The TurboGrafx-16 maintains a devoted cult following among hardcore gamers. The system never took off in America like it did in Japan, but, thanks to downloadable titles via such online services as the Nintendo Wii Virtual Console, select TurboGrafx games are currently enjoying some measure of mainstream success. If you already own a Sega Genesis and/or a Super Nintendo, but are itching to play something a little different, hop on eBay and pick up a TurboGrafx. You'll be glad you did.

TurboGrafx-16 Games

Aero Blasters

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

A nice port of Kaneko's *Air Buster* (arcade, 1990), *Aero Blasters* stands out a bit from the typical side-scroller, thanks to a nifty two-player mode that helps even the odds against the hoards of alien ships. Also unusual are tunnels that must be flown through, made easier by a barrier power-up that cushions the player's ship against the narrow walls. Other power-ups include multi-directional fire, a pair of satellites, and more. Pressing one button emits rapid fire while another button charges up a smart bomb of sorts that can destroy small enemies and enemy bullets. All in all, *Aero Blasters* is one of many fine shooters for the TurboGrafx.

Air Zonk

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Hudson Soft/Red Company. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

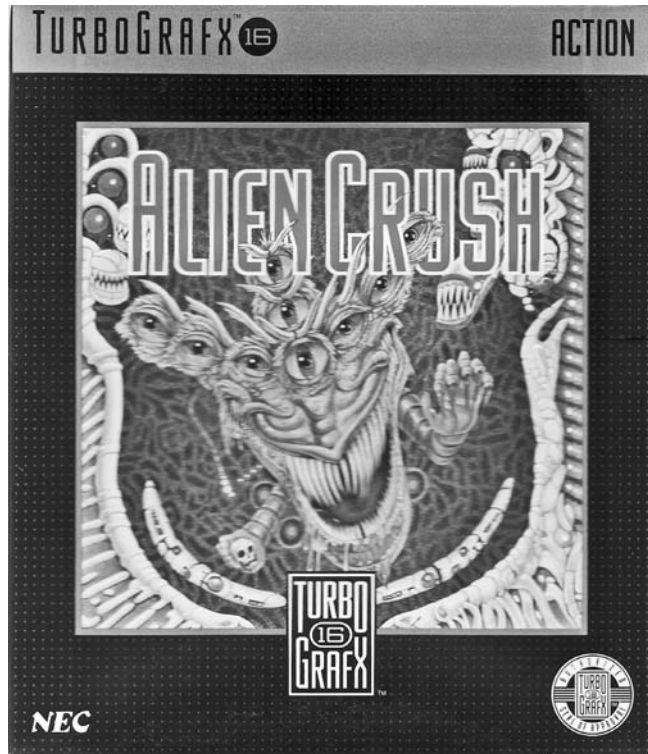
An offshoot of *Bonk's Adventure*, *Air Zonk* takes the bigheaded TurboGrafx mascot into the future, changes his name to Zonk (and his genre to shooter), and pits him against a wacky assortment of anthropomorphized enemies, including television sets, helicopters, garbage heaps, and flying octopi. An unusual power-up system lets Zonk select from 10 different "friends" (including a mummy and a large missile) to shoot alongside him. *Air Zonk* has huge bosses, a quirky assortment of weaponry, and cute, cartoonish graphics. Beneath its colorful exterior lies a potent side-scroller. Followed by: *Super Air Zonk* (TurboGrafx-CD).

Alien Crush

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Pinball, 1 player. 1989.

The word "Alien" in the title is certainly appropriate as *Alien Crush* features creature designs similar to those of artist H.R. Giger, who designed the titular creature (among other things) in the 1979 SF/horror classic, *Alien*. The "main stage" of *Alien Crush* consists of two nicely rendered, creepily organic screens featuring stylized targets and other table components with such names as slime, brain buster, dead bones lock, tentacloid lock, mouth trap, claw goal post, and scorpion bumper. (*Alien*

fans will surely recognize the Chestbuster-like creatures prominently featured.) Unfortunately, instead of scrolling vertically to show the upper and lower portions of the table, the game abruptly switches back and forth between screens. In addition to the primary two-screen table, the game features four bonus stages reachable by achieving certain conditions, such as hitting the aliens and skulls repeatedly to drop them in the holes or getting a ball in dead bones lock two when the bonus multiplier factor is an odd number. *Alien Crush* is a solid pinball title with terrific graphics, tight flipper controls, a nudge button, good music, and solid ball physics (players can select fast or slow ball speed), but it's a shame the main table doesn't scroll. Based on NEC's 1988 arcade game. Followed by the superior *Devil's Crush*, which does scroll.



While it's not as good as *Devil's Crush*, *Alien Crush* is a fun pinball game.

Andr  Panza Kick Boxing

Publisher: NEC. Developer: NEC. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Endorsed by Andr  Panza, this game lets players select from eight kick boxers (including Panza himself), each rated according to ability to resist a knockout, efficiency of blows, and ability to defend against an opponent's blows. By playing the Training mode, gamers can improve their fighter's ratings. Each fighter can dish out various punches and kicks, along with blocking and moving right and left (the side-view action is 2D and non-scrolling). Rounds are one minute each, with five rounds per match. If there's no knockout after five rounds, the computer will call a decision. A string of four lights above each boxer indicates physical condition, and fighters will recover their health between rounds. Fighters can also recover when there's no attack and when a boxer falls to the ground. Fights take place amidst a handful of spectators, including a guy in the foreground

with his back to the "camera." Overall, *Andr  Panza Kick Boxing* is a mediocre fighting game with spotty collision detection, smooth animation, and some nice lighting effects.

Ballistix

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Psygnosis. Sports/Futuristic, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A cross of sorts between air hockey and pinball, *Ballistix* is a highly original concoction. Viewing the action from overhead, players fire silver balls at a black puck (put into play by an alien claw) in hopes of deflecting said puck into the opponent's goal, all the while avoiding bumpers, acid pools, magnets, tunnels, gravity, and other obstacles. The screen gets really busy at times, making for a chaotic game. *Ballistix* for the TurboGrafx has 100 levels (compared to 64 for the Amiga and Commodore 64), but the Atari ST version has sharper graphics. *Pong* fans should enjoy the game.

Battle Royale

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Incredible Technologies. Sports/Wrestling, 1-5 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Up to five players, human- or computer-controlled, can compete in *Battle Royale*, the only wrestling title for the TurboGrafx-16. The elevated view of the non-scrolling action is from the side, with players using a small assortment of moves (including punch, kick, knee-slam, and head-butt) to defeat the other wrestlers. Players can't pin one another down, but weakened fighters can be thrown or smashed out of the ring. In addition, players can "breakout" of being held in the air. Animation is choppy, and the controls are convoluted, but the colorful, crazily outfitted wrestlers look decent, and the digitized sound effects are a treat. There are five wrestlers from which to choose: Sumo Master, Executioner, Mongo Kahn, Spitfire Spike, and Meateater, each varying in such categories as speed, strength, and recovery. Instead of having a health bar, each wrestler wears a color-coded wrist band. Other features include: instant replays, Tournament mode, special punches (which can only be used every five seconds), power-ups (which restore wrestlers to full strength), and three difficulty levels (Amateur, Intermediate, and Professional).

Blazing Lazers

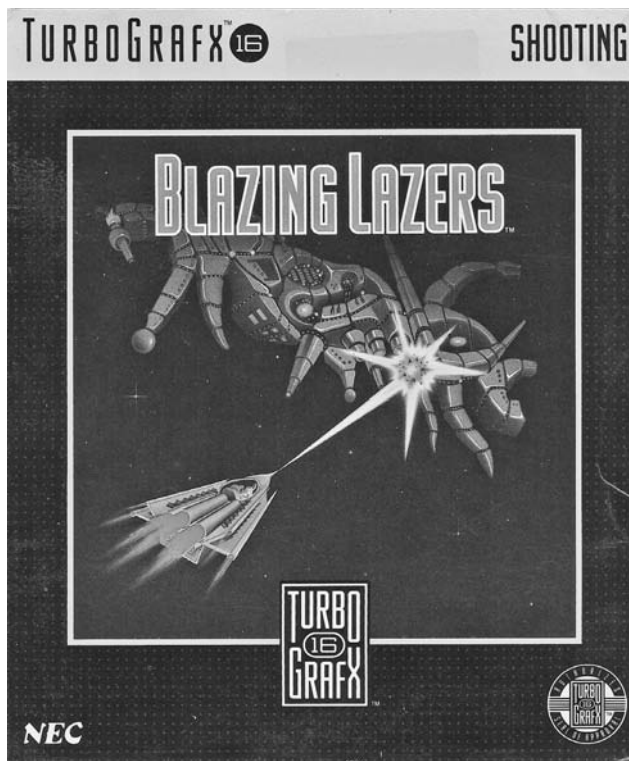
Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

One of the more popular TurboGrafx games, *Blazing Lazers* deserves its widely held status as a must-own title for the system. Commandeering a Gunhed Star Fighter, players fly over space stations and alien vistas (nine levels in all), shooting members of the Dark Squadron, which consist of swarming fighters (and other ships), brains, eyeballs, "shrapnoids" (i.e.

space rocks), and enemies that fire from fixed positions (including pyramids). There are also boss battles against such behemoths as Tri-Clops, Gatling Gun, Space Parasite, and Skull-dor. Certain destroyed enemies leave behind gels that enable players to upgrade their ship's lazer cannon with a photon blaster (up to three explosions per shot), field thunder (powerful lazer stream), a power wave (wide-range lazer beam), and a ring blaster (protective barrier). Other power-ups to grab include homing missiles, shields, multi-body (doppelganger ship), and full fire (strengthens the power of your weapons). Thanks to nifty sound effects, cool weapons, a steady stream of enemies, terrific gameplay, and a distinct lack of slowdown, *Blazing Lazers* is an awesome game. Only hardcore shooter buffs will make it past level seven.

Bloody Wolf

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Data East. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1990.



The aptly titled *Blazing Lazers* is a TurboGrafx-16 exclusive, giving owners of the system some bragging rights.

Based on Data East's 1988 arcade semi-classic, *Bloody Wolf* for the TurboGrafx has larger levels than its coin-op counterpart (not to mention an extra level, for a total of eight), but the two-player simultaneous mode is absent. The explosive, Rambo-esque action has players using knives, machine guns, flame-throwers, grenades, and other weapons to battle hoards of enemy soldiers. Surprisingly diverse, *Bloody Wolf* scrolls in all directions and lets gamers trudge through rivers, rescue hostages, save the president, ride motorcycles, enter houses, face bosses (from a behind-the-player perspective), and much more. Fans of such one-man-army titles as *Ikari Warriors*, *Contra*, and *Commando* will love *Bloody Wolf*, which is difficult, but offers unlimited continues.

Bomberman

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1991.

First released for the NES as a one-player game, *Bomberman* for the TurboGrafx quickly established the franchise as an addictive multi-player phenomenon, with gamers reveling in blowing up their friends and family members. The top-down action has each player — as a robot — scurrying around a series of non-scrolling, grid-based mazes (delineated by such items as blocks, trees, and rocks), planting bombs in strategic positions (and then running away) in order to create plus-shaped explosions and kill the other player(s). There are 64 rounds distributed among eight themed levels: The Wall, Rocky Mountains, River, Forest, Lava Cave, Inside of the Castle, Part I, Inside of the Castle, Part II, and Inside the Castle (Final Stage). In addition to blowing up the enemies and other players, the goal in each round is to uncover the exit to the next stage. Other items to uncover include skates (for faster movement), jackets (for invincibility), a remote (for detonating bombs at will), and bomb power-ups (increasing the strength, length of explosion, and number of bombs dropped at once). There are boss battles as well. This great game was also released for the PSP, GBA, and numerous other systems.

Bomberman '93

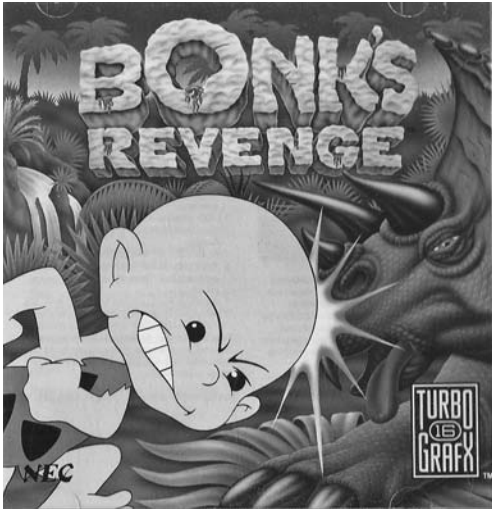
Publisher: Hudson Soft. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Bomberman '93 plays a whole lot like *Bomberman* (which is a good thing), but it features seven new stages (including a quarry, a rain forest, and a swamp), each with eight rounds of play. There are new maze features and power-ups as well, such as revolving doors, warp holes, conveyor belts, and the ability to kick bombs. Gamers can play against up to four human- or computer-controlled fellow robots. Other enemies to destroy include birds, spiders, jellyfish, slime, bosses, and more. As in *Bomberman*, the exit to each level is hidden in a block or other item delineating the maze. Simple, four-way control, on-the-fly strategy, and addictive gameplay make this, like most *Bomberman* games, a winner. Followed by numerous sequels, including: *Saturn Bomberman* (with 10-player action), *Bomberman 64* (N64), *Bomberman World* (PSX), *Bomberman Jetters* (GC), and *Bomberman Land* (Wii).

Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Red Company/Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1993.

Easily the hardest game to find in the *Bonk* trilogy, *Bonk 3* was produced near the end of the TurboGrafx-16 lifecycle. Once again, Bonk uses his large head to head-butt enemies, smash through rocks, and bounce off (and up) walls. Bonk can also climb with his teeth, ride flower copters, transform into a crab, ride zip lines, and much more. A two-player simultaneous mode has been added to the formula. Also, Bonk can now eat blue candy to turn into the gigantic Big Bad Bonk and red candy to miniaturize into Shrink Bonk (who is required for fitting into tight spaces). Once again, there are smiley faces to collect. These enable Bonk to play eight different bonus stages: Jet Roller Pipe, Building Smash, Flower Copter, Head Banging, Miracle Maze, Spin Climb, Springy Flower, and Sky Diving. (The CD version adds four versus stages). Depending on the color, bouncing on flowers produces higher jumps, meat (for invincibility, fire breath, ground-



Bonk is the closest thing the TurboGrafx has to a Mario- or Sonic-style mascot.

pound, and enemy-freeze), friendly items (such as candy, extra lives, and hearts), or enemies. Baddies to battle include Ugly Crab, Crazy Lady, Bubble Bird, Poison Fish, and Robo Turtle, among others. Like *Bonk's Adventure* and *Bonk's Revenge*, *Bonk 3* is a great game.

Bonk's Adventure

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft/Atlus/Red Company. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

The closest thing NEC has to a company mascot such as Nintendo's Mario or Sega's Sonic, Bonk is a running, jumping, head-butting cavewoman who must work his way through seven colorful, multi-stage levels (deserts, volcanoes, forests, and the like) filled with kooky creatures, perilous platforms, and obstinate obstacles (such as arrows, lava, and sliding blocks). The attack method is surprisingly versatile and fun to execute, and the variety of enemies and environments keeps things interesting throughout. Bonk, who has a large, bald head, swims underwater and up waterfalls, swings on vines, bounces on flowers (to go high or uncover helpful items), bounces on clouds, climbs cliffs with his teeth (one of many humorous elements in the game), battles dinosaur bosses, and searches for hidden rooms and items. One of the coolest things he can do is

eat meat, which gives him the power to temporarily freeze enemies by head-butting the ground (large meat turns Bonk invincible and lets him run through enemies to destroy them). Also released for the GB, NES, and arcade (Kaneko, 1994).

Bonk's Revenge

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft/Red Company. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

The sequel to *Bonk's Adventure*, *Bonk's Revenge* has better graphics than its already impressive progenitor and equally enjoyable gameplay. Players guide Bonk the cavewoman through seven multi-stage levels (including Bamboo Jungle, Hot Springs, Snow Mountain, Moon Pyramid, and Piranha River), using his massive chrome-dome to head-butt such enemies as dinosaurs, knights, axe-wielding creatures, ghosts, and crabs. There are also rolling boulders, flames, spikes, volcanoes, and other obstacles to contend with. Levels are more non-linear this time out (meaning backtracking is involved), and there's a surprising amount of vertical scrolling (Bonk can climb, swim up waterfalls, bounce upward between walls, and swing up to higher platforms). Eating meat enrages our hero, letting him perform a ground-pound, freeze enemies, turn invincible, and

breathe fire. Enemies are more plentiful this time out, but so are food (for health) and extra lives. Bonus levels are numerous as well. Also released for the Game Boy.

Boxyboy

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Media Rings.
Action Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

Viewed from overhead, *Boxyboy* is a sliding block puzzle game in which players push boxes around a grid of squares until each box sits atop a square containing a dot. This is a simple concept with four-way control, but the game gets deviously difficult pretty quickly as boxes get stuck in corners, block pathways, and otherwise make the job a deceptively tricky one. Luckily, there is a take-back feature that lets players redo their moves. There are 250 screens total, spread over the following countries: America, China, Egypt, Japan, and the South Pole. The game has a simple look (textured boxes, textured maze walls, a small man walking around), but these types of games aren't played for their visual appeal. Also released as an arcade game (Namco, 1990), *Boxyboy* looks and plays a lot like *Boxxle* (GB) and *Shove It! ... The Warehouse Game* (Genesis).

Bravoman

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

A nice port of the Japanese arcade game *Beraboh Man* (Namco, 1988), *Bravoman* puts players in the title role of a super-hero whose appendages are telescopic in nature, letting him stretch his arms and legs far across the screen to punch and kick robotic creatures. Bravoman can also run, jump, crawl, and execute head-butts. Collecting luck symbols and giving them to Lottery Man (who adds some humor to the game) earns players such helpful items as beverages (invincibility), sushi and ramen noodles (increased life gauge), piercing fists (stronger attacking power), wave-action bullets, and bullet trains (which take players non-stop to the end of the stage). There are 22 stages, with backgrounds consisting of buildings, mountains, blue skies, and the like. Certain levels take place underwater, temporarily turning the

game into a side-scrolling shooter. The overall objective in this mediocre game is to defeat Dr. Bomb and his evil minions. From its *Mega Man*-like stage design to its broken English, *Bravoman*'s Japanese heritage is obvious.

Cadash

Publisher: Working Designs. Developer: Taito. Side-Scrolling Combat/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

When compared to Taito's 1989 arcade original, *Cadash* for the TurboGrafx lacks the four-player mode (which was achieved via linked cabinets), but does include all four playable characters: fighter, mage, ninja, and priestess. Players guide their hero through a *Rastan*-like world, collecting gold and using a staff, a dagger, melee attacks, magic spells, fireballs, and/or other weapons to battle such monsters as zombies, trolls, dragons, and hands of stone. Defeating enemies gains experience points for leveling up the characters. The Genesis version of *Cadash* lacks the ninja and the priestess, making the TurboGrafx rendition the superior port.

Champions Forever Boxing

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Distinctive Software. Sports/Boxing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Endorsed by heavyweights (literally and figuratively) Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Joe Frazer, Larry Holmes, and Ken Norton, *Champions Forever Boxing* sports a side view of a non-scrolling boxing ring, where players unleash such moves as jabs, hooks, blocks, clinches, body shots, and uppercuts. The fighters, which are recognizable, move around fairly quickly and are very nicely rendered and animated. Between rounds, you can even see the damage to your boxer's face. Between rounds is also the time to upgrade your boxer. The manual claims that each boxer fights according to his professional style, but that tends to hold true in theory more than execution. Players can fight an Exhibition match, or select from three unknowns in Career mode. Realistic sound effects add to the fun. One of the better sports games for the system.

Chase H.Q.

Publisher: Taito. Developer: Taito. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1 player. 1992.

Taito brings their 1988 cops and robbers coin-op classic to the TurboGrafx-16. The game looks similar to Sega's *Out Run*, with players—viewing the action from behind their car—driving down twisting, turning streets, weaving in and out of other cars. However, instead of simply racing, players must keep up with the criminal car in order to ram it several times, ultimately placing the driver of the escaping car under arrest. Crashing too many times or driving too slowly lets the bad guy get away. The car players drive is a Porsche, outfitted with brakes, an accelerator, and high and low gear. The controls could use some work, but *Chase H.Q.* is colorful, has detailed backgrounds, and scrolls very smoothly. There are only five short levels of pick-up-and-play action, but a steep degree of difficulty—thanks in part to dodgy controls—makes the game hard to beat. Also released for the Game Boy and Game Gear. Released the same year as *Chase H.Q. II* (Genesis) and *Super Chase: Criminal Termination* (arcade). Followed by: *Super Chase H.Q.* (SNES).

Chew Man Fu

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze/Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

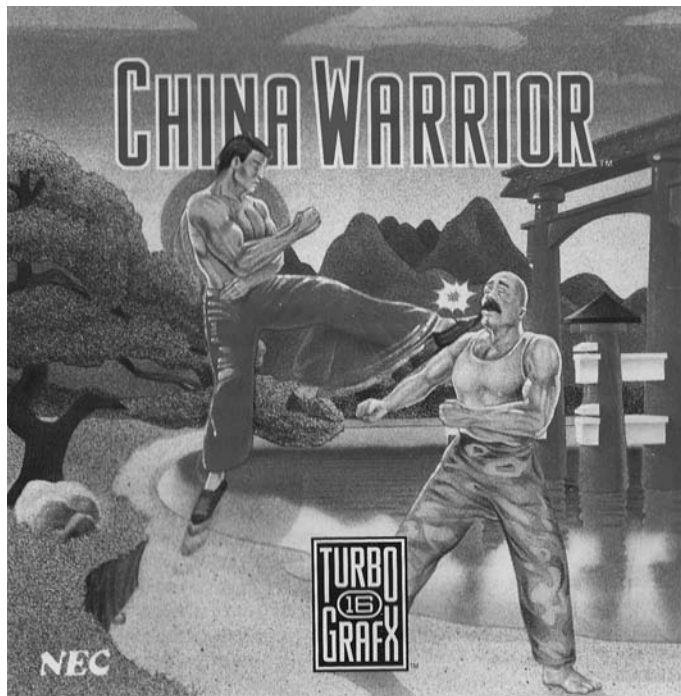
A game that should appeal to fans of such titles as *Pengo* and *Bomberman*, *Chew Man Fu* features a top-down perspective, with players—as one of two young girls—pushing large, color-coded balls around a series of non-scrolling mazes in order to destroy monkeys, porcupines, turtles, and other enemies. There are four different ball types: green (regular), red (destroys enemy with one hit), black (heavy, hard to push, but good for

breaking walls), and blue (light and fast, but weak). To defeat each of the game's 550 rounds of play, players must defeat all the enemies or place each ball on the plate of the same color. Power-ups include stopwatches (for freezing enemies) and beam plates (for killing nearby baddies). There are five types of maze rooms: Stone, Ice, Plant, Water, and Fire, and players can create and save their own mazes. In addition, there's a one-on-one Kick Ball mode that plays kind of like soccer. Though redundancy can set in, *Chew Man Fu* is colorful and has smooth controls and some genuinely tricky puzzles.

China Warrior

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1989.

China Warrior is a standard beat-'em-up in the mold of such games as *Kung Fu* (NES) and *Vigilante* (TG), but with better graphics and lesser gameplay. Players control a large, Bruce Lee-like brawler as he walks, jumps, punches, and kicks his way through such



China Warrior is a nice looking beat-'em-up title with mediocre gameplay.

mundane enemies and obstacles as monks, bats, arrows, fans, waterballs, fireballs, plates, and snakes. There are four levels of play, each with three different bosses and a bonus stage, the latter of which has players attacking a vase with nunchakus to release its gold. Three of the 12 bosses are: Xing Guan, who unleashes a deadly head butt; Niang Niang, who specializes in dancing fists; and Xing Yenwu, a master of “every type of boxing.”

CraterMaze

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze/Adventure Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

Viewed from overhead, *CraterMaze* borrows elements of *Bomberman*, *Lode Runner*, and *Space Panic*. Players guide a boy named Opi as he walks around a series of scrolling mazes, collecting treasures in each world to reveal a key to open the exit door to the next level. Naturally, he’s pursued by enemies (including cavemen, gangsters, ninjas, and robots), but he can dig holes to trap the enemies and then dispense with them by covering up said holes. There are 60 levels, two of which contain huge bosses, four of which contain friends to rescue. Power-ups to grab include yoyos, ray guns, bubble guns, invincibility, roller skates (for walking faster), and the ability to dig multiple holes at once. The game, which offers a pleasing mix of action and strategy, has a time travel element, meaning levels take place in such eras as Feudal Japan, World War II, the future, and the Jurassic age. Based on Nichibutsu’s 1987 Japanese arcade game *Kid no Hore Hore Daisakusen*, which was ported to the Famicom as *Booby Kids*.

Cyber-Core

Publisher: NEC. Developer: IGS. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

Cyber-Core is a typical, *Xevious*-style shooter—fire at airborne enemies while dropping bombs on ground-based targets—but with an insect theme (à la *Insector X* for the Genesis). The half-man, half-insect creature players control flies through eight levels (including a desert, a forest, and Tunnels of Terror), blowing away tons of bugs. Grabbing

power-ups mutates the player/protagonist through four stages of metamorphosis, making for stronger attacks. Though nothing special visually, *Cyber-Core* is an enjoyable game with plenty of cathartic (if routine) shooting action.

Darkwing Duck

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Radiance Software/Interactive Designs. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Based on Disney’s 1990s cartoon series (which was a spinoff from *DuckTales*), *Darkwing Duck* puts players in the titular role of a super-hero duck, who runs, jumps, bounces on enemies and objects, and shoots a gas gun through city streets, caves, sewers, and in and on top of buildings. Power-ups to grab include bombs, continues, invincibility icons, health eggs, and letters spelling out Darkwing to earn extra lives. There are only four levels, three of which can be played in any order and require the gamer to grab every jigsaw puzzle piece. Assembling the puzzle after the three levels are complete unlocks the fourth level, which ends in a battle against a giant robot duplicate of Darkwing. Jumping controls lag, timed jumping is crucial, and collision detection is spotty, making for a frustratingly difficult game (thankfully, there is an Easy mode). Oddly, if Darkwing stands still for too long, he will be crushed. Includes appearances by Megavolt, Egg Men, Steel Beak, and others. The music is repetitious, and the sound effects are limited, but the graphics are suitably cartoon-like. Much different than the Game Boy and NES versions.

Davis Cup Tennis

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Loricel. Sports/Tennis, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1991.

Davis Cup Tennis is loaded with features, including a Training mode, doubles action, voice effects, a line judge, a ball boy, and customizable players. In addition, there are two selectable views of the court (split and standard), and players can alter match length and ball speed. The game looks terrific, but the controls do take some getting used to. Holding the

button keeps the racket pulled back while releasing the button swings it, which is an unconventional (and even frustrating) approach. In addition, the computer opponent is brutally difficult to beat, meaning two-player action is preferred (in two-player mode, the split-screen lets both gamers view their player from behind). Also released for the Game Boy Advance and Genesis.

Dead Moon

Publisher: Natsume. Developer: Studio Ducks. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

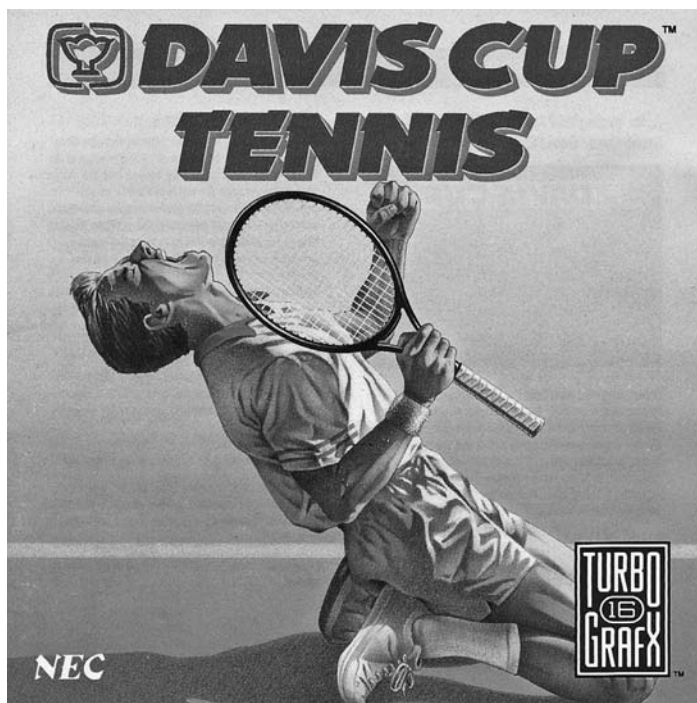
Dead Moon has a nifty, color-coded power-up system featuring four types of weaponry: circular spreader, laser beam, waves, and standard spreader. Each weapon can be upgraded several times by grabbing power-ups of the same color. Power-ups also act as shields in that getting hit simply reduces firepower by one level. Graphically, the game features some nice parallax scrolling, and the shooting action is first rate. *Dead Moon* has six fun levels of play

(City, Space, Moon, Cave, Lake, and Core) and some interesting bosses, including a giant turtle and a tyrannosaurus skeleton. Fans of such Genesis titles as *Gaijres* and *Thunder Force III* will enjoy this game.

Deep Blue

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Pack-In-Video. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

Most shooters take place in outer space, but *Deep Blue* is set underwater. Players pilot a clunky, slow-moving A.N.G.E.L. Fish Attack Sub through four aquarium-like levels, firing pulse bullets, swirl cutters, and bubble beams at mutated sea creatures. The sub is tough and can absorb lots of hits, but numerous unavoidable hits make for a poorly programmed (not to mention frustratingly difficult) game. Dull visuals and sounds add to the game's lameness. The more widely known *Darius* (and its sequels) has a fish theme as well, but it is far superior to *Deep Blue*.



Although playable, *Davis Cup Tennis* is hampered by an odd control scheme in which holding a button keeps the racket pulled back while releasing said button swings it.

Devil's Crush

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Naxat Soft. Pinball, 1 player. 1990.

The follow-up to *Alien Crush*, *Devil's Crush* is nothing less than one of the best console pinball games of its era. It improves upon its progenitor with more color, a busier playfield, faster gameplay, and vertical scrolling to show the entire table, which is comprised of three screens (as opposed to two in *Alien Crush*). Thematically, the game takes place in a world cursed with devils. The player must attack the enemies' base of operations in order to bring light back to said world. This consists of using flippers to keep a ricocheting ball in play so it will hit such tantalizing targets as skeleton insects, dragon

heads, slimes, sorcerers, and skeleton knights. As in *Alien Crush*, the table is organic in nature, meaning it looks extremely cool and has lots of animations. Also like *Alien Crush*, performing specific objectives will shift the action to one of several single-screen bonus rounds. *Devil's Crush* has only one table (apart from the bonus screens), but what a table it is. Released for the Genesis as *Dragon's Crush*, but with more graphical detail, more bonus rounds, and an options screen (for a sound test, controller configuration, and Tilt mode). Followed by: *Dragon's Revenge* (Genesis).

Double Dungeons

Publisher: NEC. Developer: NCS. First-Person Role-Playing Game, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

The big selling point for *Double Dungeons* is its two-player simultaneous mode, a highly unusual element for this type of game. Players, armed with a dagger and a shield, maneuver through 22 different dungeon mazes (each with the same color scheme, unfortunately), searching for treasure and keys while battling magicians, ghosts, devils, and other monsters. Upgradeable player characteristics include attack power, defensive power, evasive strength, experience, and hit points. Power-ups include energy bursts, death thunder, earth shakers, and more. Battles are simplistic (push button repeatedly, read text to follow action), and gameplay can be tedious, but the two-player mode does have its moments.

Dragon Spirit

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

Dragon Spirit has players controlling a dragon in-

stead of a ship. The dragon flies over eight areas of play (volcanoes, deserts, glaciers, jungles, and the like), firing dragon breath at airborne enemies and obstacles while shooting fireballs at land-based targets. The graphics are slightly more pixelated than those found in Namco's 1987 arcade semi-classic, and a level is missing, but the game retains most of the look, challenge, and fun of the original. It even includes the double- and triple-head power-ups. Nitpickers will notice that the animated intro in which a man is struck by lightning and turned into a dragon is absent.

Dragon's Curse

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Platform/Side-Scrolling Combat/Adventure, 1 player. 1990.

In *Dragon's Curse*, players begin as Human, but are transformed (via curses) into various other creatures with each defeat of a dragon boss. These creatures include Lizard Man, Mouse Man, Piranha Man, Tiger Man, and Hawkman. To battle the dragons, skele-



Based on the 1987 Namco arcade game, *Dragon Spirit* is one of many quality shooters for the TurboGrafx.

tons, ninjas, crabs, snakes, and other enemies that populate the game, players are outfitted with a sword and can acquire fireballs, armor upgrades, arrows, boomerangs, tornados, and thunder. There are five cute, cartoonish levels to explore and conquer: Desert World, Sea World, Jungle World, Cave World, and Sky World. Based on *Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap* for the Sega Master System.

Drop Off

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Data East. Ball-and-Paddle, 1 player. 1990.

Drop Off borrows from such classic games as *Breakout* and *Super Breakout*, but instead of simple left to right movement, players can guide their paddle in all directions. Also, the paddle — if you can call it that — is round instead of flat, meaning the hitting surface is frustratingly small and the ball moves in more unpredictable patterns. Players must rebound the bouncing, fast-moving ball off their “paddle” and into descending groupings of fruit, spheres, lips, and other circular objects, making them

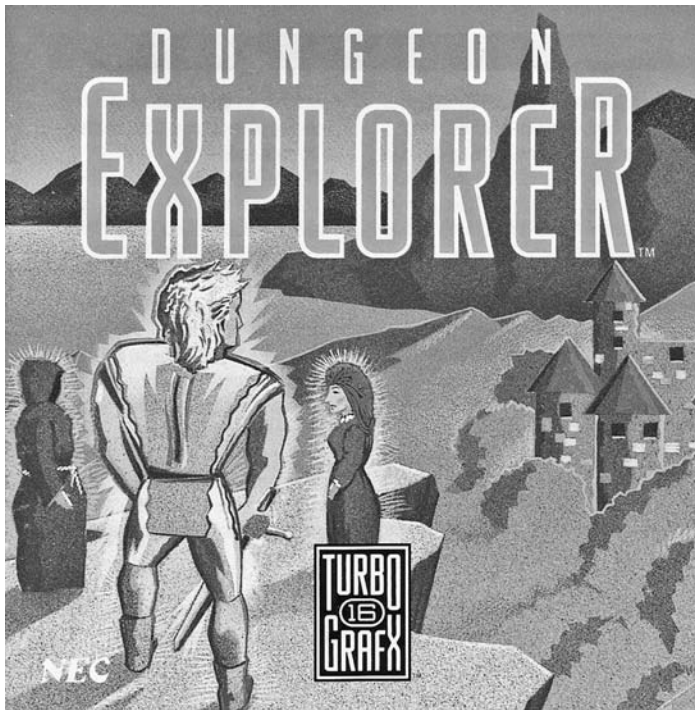
disappear in the process. If the player eliminates a link holding the items together, several items will be eliminated at once. Separating the game further from its progenitors are boss battles against purple demons and other enemies. *Drop Off* is playable, but it's far too easy for the ball to get past your paddle, which is why the designers incorporated a wall across the bottom that will rebound the ball back into the playfield. For a superior *Breakout* clone, play *Arkanoid* for the NES.

Dungeon Explorer

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Maze Shooter/Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1989.

The Digital Press *Classic Video Games Collector's Guide Advance Edition* calls *Dungeon Explorer* “a cross between *Gauntlet* and *Zelda*,” and that's a pretty good description of the game. The overhead-view action evokes *Gauntlet*, with players (as a fighter, thief, warlock, witch, bard, bishop, elf, or gnome) walking

around dungeon rooms, shooting darts, daggers, axes, and other weapons at such re-spawning aliens as evil ants, reptile men, skeletal knights, and metallic slime. The game is deeper than *Gauntlet*, however, as players can talk to characters, use 11 different accessories (such as holy water, a ring of healing, and a crown of intelligence), and wield white and black magic (sound waves, teleportation, doubled attack power, shields, and the like). Each character players control differs in his or her type of magic, attacking power, and ability to move. Briskly paced gameplay, a solid storyline, good music, and huge, colorful bosses help make *Dungeon Explorer* a grade-A title. Multi-player action recommended.



Dungeon Explorer borrows gameplay elements from two better-known classics: *Gauntlet* and *The Legend of Zelda*.

Falcon

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Spectrum HoloByte. Flight Combat Simulator, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A console take on the computer game series (which began in 1987), *Falcon* for the TurboGrafx is a dull, slowly paced game in which players undertake 16 missions largely consisting of flying around for a time, and then engaging in brief battles with Su-25S bombers, MiG-21S fighters, and MiG-29S interceptors. The in-flight graphics are boring, and the controls, which sorely need a computer keyboard, are a pain to get accustomed to (despite the inclusion of five training missions). The large display panel gives tons of info, making the playfield just half a screen in size. TurboExpress owners can link up with a buddy for head-to-head dogfights.

Fantasy Zone

Publisher: NEC. Developer: NEC Avenue. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1989.

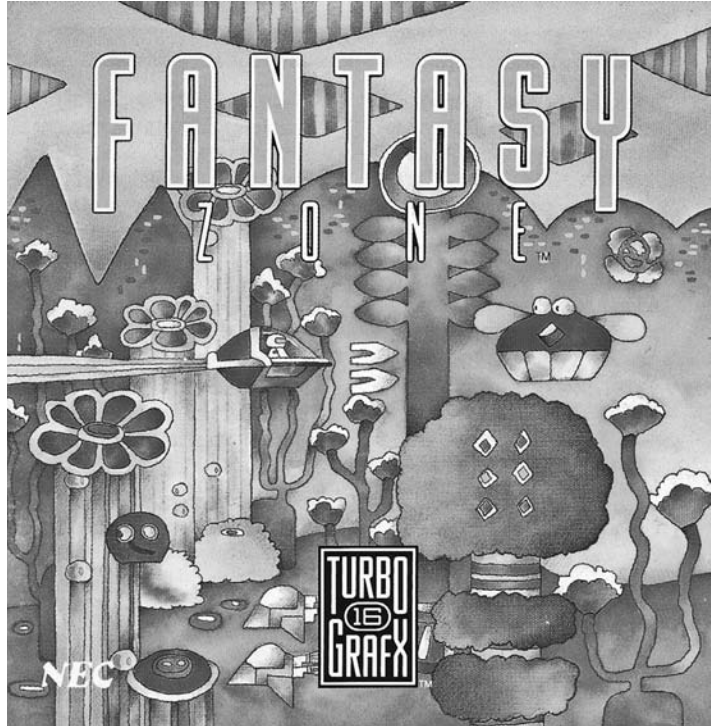
Despite its cute characters and pastel coloring, *Fantasy Zone* borrows heavily from the outer space arcade classic *Defender*, in that players fly left and right around a busy, wraparound, side-scrolling world, shooting airborne enemies. The player's ship in *Fantasy Zone* is an egg-shaped craft called an Opa-Opa, and the enemies include such whimsical characters as Mr. Spinner, Flap Jack, Octapod, Pumpkin Head, and Frogie. In addition to straight shots, the Opa-Opa can fire downward-arcng bombs (à la *Cosmic Avenger*, *Scramble*, and *Super Cobra*). By collecting coins for use in a shop, players can purchase 12 different parts to increase the ship's power, including

turbo engine, wide-beam, laser beam, 7-way shot, twin bombs, smart bombs, and fire bombs. To advance to each of eight different planets, players must destroy all the bases and the boss within each level. This fun, challenging game is an excellent port of Sega's 1985 arcade game and a nice upgrade over the NES version (which substitutes 5-way shots for 7-way) and the Master System rendition (which is absent certain niggling details, like the radar showing how many bases are left). Followed by: *Fantasy Zone Gear* (GG).

Final Lap Twin

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Formula-1/Indy Racing, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

A sequel to Namco's *Final Lap* (arcade, 1987) and *Final Lap UR* (arcade, 1988), *Final Lap Twin* offers solid, *Pole Position*-style racing, but adds an unusual Quest Mode, which is an "all-new racing adventure" in which players enter a Baby Four-Wheel-Drive Race. The Quest Mode cars consist of a body, a battery, a



A nice port of the 1985 Sega arcade game, *Fantasy Zone* is a "cute-'em-up" that is superior to the NES and Master System versions.



Final Lap Twin will appeal to fans of the arcade classic *Pole Position* (1982).

motor, tires, and a wing, all of which can be upgraded by winning races. In the standard F-1 modes, eight drivable cars are available (F-1s and F3000s), each having either manual or standard transmission and a V8 or V10 engine. The goal is to place in the top six finishers of each race. There are 20 racecourse circuits in all, featuring such track elements as hairpin curves, S-curves, and zigzags. Unlike *Final Lap*, which had separate monitors for multi-player gaming, *Final Lap Twin* offers split-screen action (even in one-player mode). Followed by three arcade games: *Final Lap 2* (1991), *Final Lap 3* (1992), and *Final Lap R* (1993).



Galaga '90 is nothing less than one of the greatest shooters of all time.

Galaga '90

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Slide-and-Shoot, 1 player. 1989.

An excellent port of Namco's *Galaga '88* (arcade, 1987), *Galaga '90* stays faithful in spirit to the original *Galaga* (arcade, 1981), but is enhanced by a number of features designed to up the ante in terms of challenge, diversity, and aesthetics. These include bosses, warp speed, more colorful graphics (including backgrounds), in-game music, triple firing action, asteroids to shoot, multiple dimensions, and "Galactic Dancing" (which is a funny term for the game's bonus rounds). *Galaga '90* consists of 29 levels and is a blast to play, as gamers maneuver a

ship along the bottom of the screen, firing upward at swirling, twirling, curling enemies that move in various patterns and line up in various formations. Followed by: *Galaga: Destination Earth* (PSX).

Ghost Manor

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: ICOM Simulations. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

Ghost Manor has good, atmospheric graphics and music, but the big-headed boy players control appears to suffer from hydrocephalus. He is fairly agile, though, as he runs, jumps, swims, and crawls his way through five haunted levels (littered with stairs, ghosts, torches, moving platforms, rock walls, and the like), shooting bats, ghouls, demons, zombies, and other creatures. Ammo is rather scarce, causing some frustration, and platforms containing slides are annoyingly common, causing further frustration. What the game needs is a continual weapon (like Simon Belmont's whip) and fewer (if any) slides. Not to be confused with *Ghost Manor* for the Atari 2600.

Gunboat

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Accolade. First-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

Gunboat is a claustrophobic shooter that puts players at the helm of a Navy River Patrol Boat, slowly cruising through various combat zones, including the jungles of Vietnam and the waterways of South America. The boat can go left and right and forward and reverse, and it offers several viewpoints, including through the view screen and from the perspective of the bow gunner, the midship gunner, and the stern gunner. Regardless of the view, the boat and its guns and instruments (direction indicator, clock, compass, message screen, and the like) take up a large portion of the screen, leaving a small playfield. Weapons include machine guns, a minigun, a grenade launcher, and a mortar launcher. Enemy targets include tanks, missiles, missile launchers, bridges, infantry, docks, machine gun nests, helicopters, boats, trucks, and more. There are three practice modes: Gunnery, Grenade, and Pilot, along

with Report for Duty, which is the real deal. Prior to setting out, players will need to arm the gunboat with the preferred engine and arsenal.

Hit the Ice

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Taito. Sports/Hockey, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1992.

Based on Williams' 1990 arcade game (which has superior voice effects), *Hit the Ice* is a chaotic game of three-on-three hockey. The players are big, cartoonish, and colorful, and gamers can perform such traditional moves as passes, slap shots, and checks, the latter of which play a big role in the game. Less traditional are super shots, which are so powerful that they knock down the goalie. There are few rules, and brawls frequently break out, emphasizing the arcade-style nature of the gameplay (*Hit the Ice* is sort of the hockey version of *Arch Rivals*, but not as good). The losing fighter's team skates slower for a short time. Gamers can play against each other or team up to battle the computer. There are a variety of players to select from, each with different moves. Exhibition and Championship play are available. A vocal, highly animated crowd looks on. If a player gets behind by five points, he can imbibe a power drink that temporarily enhances his skating and shooting ability (this drink cost money in the arcade version). Also released for the SNES, Genesis, and Game Boy.

Impossamole

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Gremlin Graphics. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

Marred by poor collision detection and an unfair level of difficulty (certain enemies are invincible, certain falling objects seem impossible to avoid, and the title character gets bounced around a lot), *Impossamole* stars Monty the Mole as a super-hero traveling through five levels of play: The Orient, The Amazon Jungle, Ice Land (a pretty North Pole level with an igloo village and icy caverns), The Bermuda Triangle, and The Alien Planet. Monty uses a hammer gun, a bubble gun, and a kicking maneuver to battle the many strange

enemies he will encounter, including spear-throwing natives, crazed monkeys, mutant snowmen, space mutants, storm clouds, and walking cameras. Monty also runs, jumps, swims, and climbs. Collecting soup cans makes Monty's weapons more powerful, certain enemies turn into boxes players can throw, and grabbing fruit and other items gives players extra points. *Impossamole* for the TG-16 is based on the 1990 computer game of the same name, and Monty the Mole himself appeared in a number of other computer games, including *Wanted: Monty Mole* (1984) and *Moley Christmas* (1987).

Jack Nicklaus' Turbo Golf

Publisher: Accolade. Developer: Accolade.
Sports/Golf, 1 or 2 players (alternating). 1990.

Play against "The Golden Bear" and eight fictional golfers in *Jack Nicklaus' Turbo Golf*. The game plays well, but will be overly familiar to those who played lots of golf titles during the 16-bit era. Prior to teeing off, which features a behind-the-golfer perspective, an overhead view lets players study the hole, analyze hazards (doglegs, trees, water, cart paths, out of bounds, and roughs), and check out pin placement (which is random, changing the hole every time the game is played). The computer selects clubs for the player based on distance, but gamers may want to change clubs after taking wind and other conditions into account. A three-tap swing meter lets players determine how hard and how straight to hit the ball. While putting, players must take hills into consideration since many greens aren't flat. There are two modes of play — Skins and Stroke — and two skill levels: Beginner and Expert. Also released for the TurboGrafx-CD.

Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu

Publisher: Hudson Soft. Developer: Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

A graphical upgrade over the NES game of the same name, *Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu* for the TurboGrafx sports cartoon-like visuals and is set in a fantasy environment. Jackie can walk, jump, punch, and kick, and, by beating up frogs (!), can acquire the following

attacks: tornado, sky, psycho wave, and spin kicks (180 and 360 degree). Frogs also emit life points and continues. Other enemies include ninjas, swordsmen, birds, butterflies, fish, bosses (some of which are incredibly cool), tigers, and more. Obstacles, including spikes and moving platforms, are typical of the genre. Chan lacks the acrobatic maneuvers and the overall toughness of his real-life counterpart (who starred in such films as *Rumble in the Bronx* and *Rush Hour*), but this is still an enjoyable game.

J.J. & Jeff

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft.
Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1990.

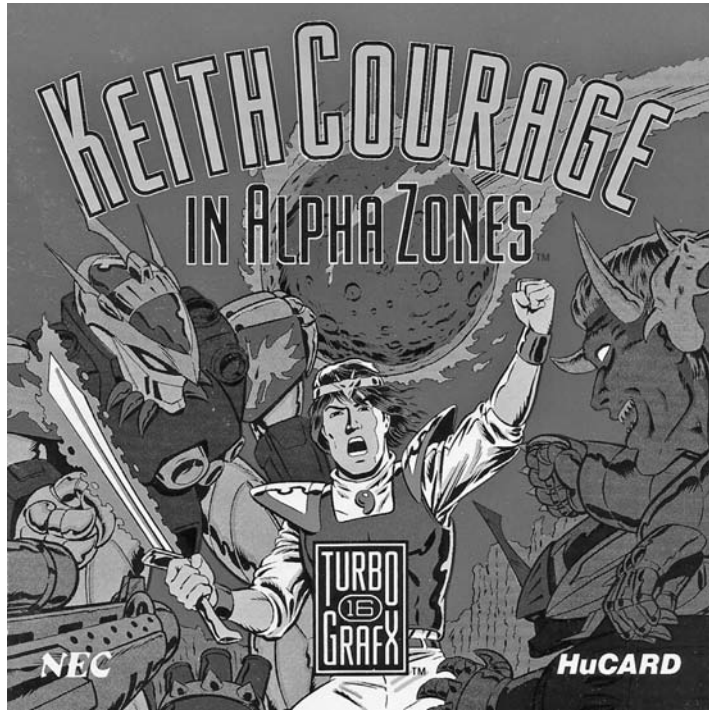
This game lets players control one of two suit-wearing, big-headed detectives, J.J. or Jeff, both of whom battle enemies by kicking, unleashing a spray attack, and jumping Mario-style. Unfortunately, both members of the less-than-dynamic duo perform about the same: blandly. There are more than 30 different enemy types, including Julio Copter, Jerry Jaws, Crabby, a dinosaur named NES Junior, and a bird named Poopbatross. The eight levels of play — sporting such typical scenery as brick walls, trees, clouds, and mountains — are riddled with hidden items, including a key (for reaching the end boss), coins (for playing the slot machine), French fries (for better spray attacks), curried rice (for restoring health), and The Bee Keeper (useful for battling Boss Kara). Kicking around in seemingly random areas helps uncover the hidden objects. *J.J. & Jeff* is a westernized (not to mention sanitized) take on the Japanese PC Engine game *Kato-chan & Ken-chan*, which is rife with rude, crude bathroom humor (the spray attack in the Japanese game is flatulence, for example).

Keith Courage in Alpha Zones

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft.
Side-Scrolling Combat/Side-Scrolling Platform/Adventure, 1 player. 1989.

The pack-in game with the TurboGrafx-16 system, *Keith Courage in Alpha Zones* puts players in the role of the titular hero. The action takes place in two areas: the Overworld, where

Keith defeats enemies to gain gold to purchase bombs, health, and sword power-ups; and the Underworld, where Keith dons his Nova Suit (which grants speed and a bigger sword) to battle crypt creatures, skulls, devil foot monsters, and other beasts (including bosses, which are a challenge to find). The Underworld is difficult (one blind jump into a spiked pit spells automatic death), but doable thanks to unlimited continues and the ability to rebuild Keith's health and bombs (a tedious, but easy chore). Gameplay is uneven, and the controls and graphics are mediocre, but the challenge will keep hardcore gamers interested until the bitter end.



Keith Courage in Alpha Zones was the pack-in game with the TurboGrafx-16 console.

King of Casino

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Victor Interactive/Algorithm Institute. Gambling, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1990.

King of Casino features 15 different Vegas-style casinos, each one specializing in two or more of five different games: Poker, Slot Machines, Keno, Roulette, and Blackjack, the latter of which includes insurance, splits, and doubling down. After checking into a hotel and maybe selecting the music and reading a magazine (which shows casino data), players venture out into the city (which is viewed from an angled/overhead perspective) and to a gambling destination. The casinos are spacious and decked out in semi-fine fashion, populated with such objects as tables, chairs, carpet, other players (who remain stock-still), dealers, and potted plants. Unlike *Vegas Dream* for the NES, your fellow casino customers will not proposition you for handouts, romance, side bets, or anything else. Money won can be used to purchase such items as a sports car and an airplane.

There are three modes of play: Normal, Fast, and Party.

KLAX

Publisher: Tengen. Developer: Tengen. Action Puzzle, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

A port of Atari's challenging, *Tetris*-influenced (though still original) arcade game, *KLAX* for the TurboGrafx-16 has players lining up descending (on a conveyor belt) tiles in rows, columns, and diagonals. Scoring a "KLAX" (three or more tiles of the same color lined up) removes those tiles from the screen. As a given tile falls, players can catch it on a paddle and drop it into position below, temporarily hold onto the tile (up to five tiles at a time can be held), or hoist the tile back up to the conveyor belt. Combos are worth extra points, and certain objectives (such as getting a set number of KLAXs) must be fulfilled to complete each wave. Letting too many tiles build up at the bottom of the screen ends the game. The two-player mode is split screen, with each contestant playing his or her own game. (Un-

like *Tetris 2*, one player's game does not affect the other.) The voice effects are a little scratchy, but this is nevertheless a fine rendition of the 1989 coin-op classic. Also released for the Atari 7800, Atari Lynx, Game Boy, Game Gear, Genesis, NES, and other systems.

Legend of Hero Tonma

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Irem. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1993.

The cartoonish, oddly named *Legend of Hero Tonma* is a nice port of the 1989 Irem arcade obscurity. Players guide a boy named Tommy through dungeons, ruins, a castle, and other locales, opening treasure chests and throwing fireballs at a variety of creatures. Tommy can jump on certain enemies to stun them (à la Mario), but bombs and upgraded fireballs (large, zigzag, and homing) are his best weapons. One-hit deaths and tough bosses (especially when Tommy is not powered up) make for a challenging game. *Ninja Spirit* fans should have a good time with *Legend of Hero Tonma*.

The Legendary Axe

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Victor Interactive. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1989.

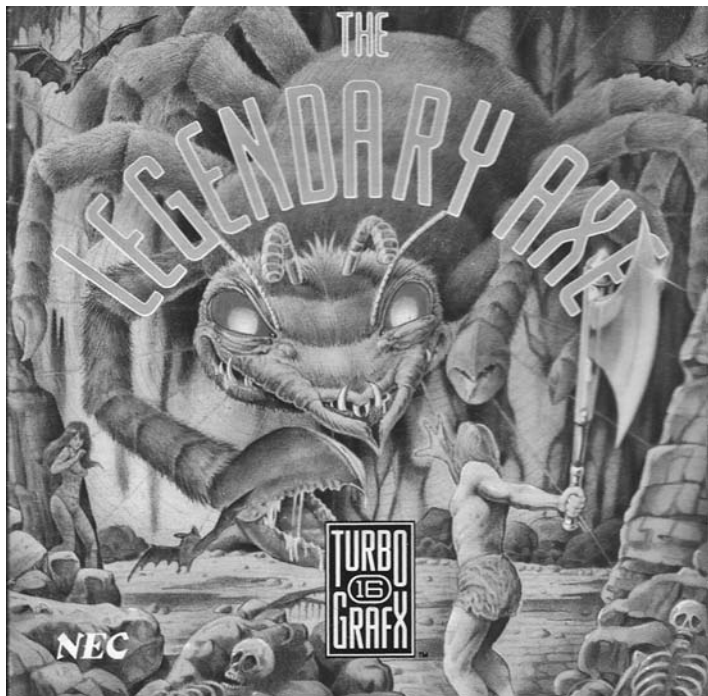
One of the more popular TurboGrafx titles, *The Legendary Axe* puts players in the role of the loincloth-wearing Gogan, the Mighty Warrior, who must rescue his friend, Flare, from the evil cult leader, Jagu. The titular axe is Gogan's only weapon, but a meter indicates his attack strength, which can be increased by holding off on attacks and by smashing Jagu idols to grab power-ups. (Other power-ups include increased attack speed and restored health.) When Gogan attacks, the strength meter decreases, meaning

the player can use a bit of strategy by deciding when to use lots of weaker attacks and when to hold off and unleash a stronger attack. There are four standard linear levels (caves, jungles, and mountains), plus a maze level and a final battle against Jagu. The single weapon makes the game feel somewhat limited, but the powered-up axe is fun to use, and there are ladders to climb, giant boulders to destroy (or swing over with *Jungle Hunt*-type vines), lava pits to jump over, thrown axes to duck under, and more. The first couple of levels are easy, but the third gets difficult as enemies, including Ape Man, Cave Man, Frog Man, and Demon Giant, frequently attack in threes. Flying enemies are pesky as well.

Legendary Axe II

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Victor Interactive. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

Unlike *The Legendary Axe*, this sequel's main weapon is a sword. Also, players can now obtain other weapons, including a royal sword, magic bombs, a sickle-and-chain (which has a



Fans of such titles as *Golden Axe* and *Rastan* should take a look at both *Legendary Axe* games.

long reach), and, of course, an axe, which is, fittingly enough, the most powerful weapon. In addition, the strength meter has been removed (though weapons can still be powered up), there's less platforming, the graphics are darker (and less attractive), and players now control a Conan-like character instead of a Tarzan wannabe. Areas to run, jump, hack, and slash your way through include: Mountain Entrance, Water Caverns, Underground Temple, Skull Dungeon, Crypts of Slime, Cliffs of Chaos, and Royal Palace, each of which is littered with such enemies as Iron Back, Guardlocks (a sword-and-shield wielding creature), Pump Man (a clawed fiend), and Tobo (a robot). Despite the many changes, the game remains faithful in spirit to its progenitor and is still loads of fun. Also, it's easier to beat and therefore less frustrating. Fans of such titles as *Golden Axe*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Rastan*, and *The Astyanax* should enjoy *Legendary Axe II*.

Magical Chase

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Palsoft/Quest. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1993.

One of the most highly sought after titles in the TurboGrafx-16 library, *Magical Chase* was produced in limited quantities near the end of the lifecycle of the system, making it tough to find and very expensive today. The cute, colorful game puts players in control of a blond-haired, broom-riding magician named Ripple, shooting her way through six vibrant, highly enjoyable levels, including a castle, a forest, inside an airship, and outside a city at night. Shooting enemies leaves behind gemstones, which players can use in Halloween Jack's shop to purchase such items and weapons as health,



speed, 3 way fire, magic homing missiles, wave shots, bound shots (bounces off ground or enemy), swing shots (scatters magic light), and x4 special (four times the power of normal shots). What sets the game apart from the pack (other than delightful visuals and terrific, fast-paced shooting action) are a pair of stars named Topsy and Turvy, which shoot alongside Ripple and can be shifted around, locked into place, and otherwise utilized to fire in all different directions. Also neat are the game's wonderful array of enemies, from teddy bears to flying dragons to cannonball-shooting fish to wacky robots. Interestingly, the TurboGrafx-16 version was graphically upgraded (by Quest) over its PC Engine counterpart.

Military Madness

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Turn-Based Strategy, 1 or 2 Players (simultaneous). 1989.

Military Madness is a high quality, strategy-intensive game that pits the Allied Forces (player one) against the Axis powers (player two or the computer) in a battle on a futuristic version of the moon, which is embellished

with bridges, roads, and other terrain. Gameplay consists of plotting moves and commanding units on 16 different hexagonal grid maps in order to launch (and defend against) air and land attacks. Players begin with tanks and foot soldiers at their command and can upgrade to bigger, more powerful weaponry for completing such objectives as capturing factories and prison camps. During battles, the view changes to a close-up perspective. In 1998, the game was remade for the PlayStation as *Nectaris: Military Madness*.

Moto Roder

Publisher: NEC. Developer: NCS. Demolition/Combat Racing, 1-5 players (simultaneous). 1989.

Viewed from overhead, *Moto Roder* has players driving around six different twisting, turning racetracks (World 1, World 2, Technical, Corridor, Strange, and Trap), with the camera always following the leader. If a car gets too far behind (i.e. the back edge of the screen), it will automatically be thrust forward to join the pack (shades of *Micro Machines*), taking some damage in the process. Winning races gives players money for such car upgrades as body, brakes, handling, engine, and turbo, and buying and using these items strategically is a key to winning. In addition, players can purchase bombs and grenades, which are especially fun to deploy in multi-player mode (which is where this game really shines). Two control schemes are available. Like many top-down racers, *Moto Roder* has flat, humdrum visuals. However, it is a fun game, especially when played with a group. Fans of the more well known *R.C. Pro-Am* should especially enjoy it.

Neutopia

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1990.

A blatant clone of *The Legend of Zelda*, *Neutopia* looks and plays a whole lot like the NES classic, but it has more graphical detail. Gamers control a young hero named Jazeta, who must explore four different “spheres” (land, subterranean, sea, and sky) to save

Princess Aurora. Jazeta uses a sword, a shield, a fire wand, and bombs to battle dragons, gargoyles, rock monsters, and other such enemies. Additional activities include pushing rocks, bombing walls, burning trees, using keys to enter crypts, finding underground dungeons, opening treasure chests, creating rainbow bridges, confronting bosses (including a demon turtle and a stone giant), and more. The final battle against the evil demon Dirth takes place at the North Pole. Although highly unoriginal, *Neutopia* is a very nicely programmed game that fans of the genre will thoroughly enjoy.

Neutopia II

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Hudson Soft. Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1992.

Jazeta, hero of the original *Neutopia*, is away in a foreign land, meaning this time his son must save the proverbial day. Our hero is outfitted with a sword and shield and can throw bombs to defeat enemies or break through walls. Pushing rocks uncovers hidden areas and provides access to such items as treasure, sword upgrades, and keys. Certain panels of the floor move when stepped on, blocking or clearing the way. Areas to explore include caves, labyrinths, islands, volcanoes, towers, and more. *Neutopia II* is less linear than its predecessor and provides players with a number of new items, including a pair of magic wands, boomerangs, and a flailing weapon.

New Adventure Island

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Hudson Soft. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1992.

New Adventure Island is essentially a remake of the original *Adventure Island* for the NES (which spawned sequels for the NES and SNES), but has better, more colorful graphics. A ball cap-wearing Master Higgins works his way through seven levels of side-scrolling action, each of which has four stages to explore. Actually, there's little exploring involved as the game moves quickly and has timed stages. Higgins runs, jumps on platforms and over obstacles (such as fire and rocks), and can pick up

arrows, boomerangs, hatchets, and magical fire to shoot and throw left and right at the birds, frogs, skulls, and other enemies he will encounter. Higgins can also ride a skateboard that makes him go faster, but he can't travel the other direction or stop while on the board. Grabbing fruit and milk restores energy, and Honey Girl is on hand to provide temporary invincibility. Gameplay evokes *Super Mario Bros.* to some degree, but is more like *Sonic the Hedgehog* in terms of moving at a faster pace. Fans of old-school platformers will enjoy the challenges *New Adventure Island* has to offer. Released the same year as *Super Adventure Island* (SNES). Followed by: *Super Adventure Island II* (SNES).

Night Creatures

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Manley & Associates. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1991.

Like *Altered Beast*, *Night Creatures* lets players transform into wild animals, including a wolf, an owl, a badger, and a bear. Unfortunately, morphing drains power, causing some frustration. Also, players must press pause to morph and change out weaponry (axe, club, sword, rifle, spear, etc.), interrupting the flow of the monster-punching action. The non-linear gameplay evokes *Castlevania II*, and the creepy creatures (witches, mummies, vampires, and the like) and atmospheric swamps, graveyards, and catacombs give the game an appropriately haunting horror vibe. May appeal to fans of *Shape Shifter* for the TurboGrafx-CD.

Ninja Spirit

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Irem. Side-Scrolling Combat/Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1990.

A terrific side-scroller that fans of *Ninja Gaiden* (NES) will thoroughly enjoy, *Ninja Spirit* puts players in the role of Moonlight, who is equipped with four interchangeable weapons for battling the various ninjas, wolves, bosses (including a two-axed ogre), sword-wielding monks, and other enemies that appear throughout the game's seven levels. These weapons include: throwing knives, a sickle-and-chain, bombs, and a sword. A number of

power-ups are available, the most notable of which is a move-mimicking, alter ego shadow ninja (or two ninjas) like that found in *Ninja Gaiden II*. *Ninja Spirit* for the TurboGrafx is a nice port of Irem's 1988 arcade game (despite minor graphical downgrades and some flickering and slowdown), and it adds an easier mode of play (called PC-Engine) in which Moonlight is given five health units per life (as opposed to one-hit deaths).

Order of the Griffon

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Westwood Associates. First-Person Action Role-Playing Game, 1 player. 1992.

This *Dungeons & Dragons* game lets players select four characters from seven different character classes: clerics, dwarves, elves, fighters, halflings, thieves, and wizards. There are three characters per class, meaning there're 21 characters in all. Each character is rated according to such attributes as strength, intelligence, wisdom, and dexterity. Players explore the land of Mystara, build up their characters, and engage in tactical, turn-based battles against such enemies as snakes, vampires, and zombies. Navigating the world map is viewed from an overhead perspective while a first-person viewpoint is employed when players enter dungeons, forests, rooms, towns, and other specific locations. This TurboGrafx exclusive is recommended for fans of such games as *Dungeon Master* (SNES) and *Wizardry* (NES).

Ordyné

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

A nice port of Namco's 1988 Japanese "cute-'em-up" (a shooter with cute, brightly colored graphics), *Ordyné* puts players in the role of scientist Tomari Yuichiro, flying through the air in a small ship, shooting and bombing such enemies as snapping teeth, gun turrets, flying turtles and dolphins, mechanical fish, and submarines. There are obstacles to dodge, such as rock formations (under water) and a maze of rotating walls, and there are bosses to destroy, including a spinning fireball and giant

ships. The enemies appear in formations (à la *Galaga* and *Gyruss*), and shooting an entire formation emits floating crystals that can be used to purchase such items as speed-up, rapid fire, three-way fire, extra ships, and wide shots. Pit stops where items can be purchased appear in the sky on a regular basis. A second player can join in as Yuichiro's assistant, Sunday Chin. *Ordyné*, which looks and plays great, is a little easier than such hardcore shooters as *R-Type* and *Gradius*, but it nevertheless presents a formidable challenge, especially in later levels. Quirky sound effects add to the fun in this distinctly Japanese game.

Pac-Land

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1989.

Other than starring Pac-Man, the first cutesy video game character and one of the two or three most famous icons in the history of the industry, *Pac-Land* is a rather non-descript platformer. The simple, flat, cartoonish graphics display Pac-Man walking along (yes, he has legs now), jumping over obstacles and avoiding those pesky ghosts, who float, hop on pogo sticks, ride buses, planes, and UFOS, and otherwise stay on Pac-Man's tail. Pac-Man can do high and low jumps, ride on monster heads, come to abrupt stops, and fly (using magic shoes). Curiously, one unintuitive control option has players using the buttons to walk and the d-pad for jumping. Gobbling power pills to eat ghosts still grants some measure of satisfaction, as does munching fruit, but Pac-Man is more at home in a maze than he is in *Pac-Land*, which is comprised of Monster Mansion (be careful of dead-end passages), bridges (beware of water spouts), forests

(watch for enemies hopping on pogo sticks), mountains (dodge airplanes), streets (side-step monsters lurking inside windows, doors, and cars), and deserts (avoid quicksand skulls). The game gets tough a little past the midway point, but unlimited continues make it beatable. Finishing the game starts it over from the beginning, but makes it more difficult and changes the name to *Pac-Land Pro*. Based on the 1984 Bally/Midway arcade game. Also released for the Atari Lynx.

Parasol Stars: The Story of Bubble Bobble III

Publisher: Working Designs. Developer: Taito. Non-Scrolling Platform, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1991.

The third game in the series (after *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands: The Story of Bubble Bobble 2*), *Parasol Stars*, unlike its progenitors, is not based on an arcade game. Bubby and Bobby, each armed with a parasol (umbrella), must run and jump in a series of platform-heavy, *Bubble Bobble*-type levels, using



A nice port of the 1984 arcade game, *Pac-Land* puts maze-dweller Pac-Man in a side-scrolling platformer.

the parasols to block, stun, or throw such enemies as cars, unicorns, and birds. A parasol can also be used as a parachute and to catch orbs (often called “droplets”) that drop down from the ceiling and roll on the platforms. The orbs can be thrown at enemies, and up to five can be collected to form a larger orb equipped with a special power. The levels scroll to some degree, but the game basically plays like a non-scrolling platformer (hence the genre designation). Cute graphics and sounds belie the game’s insidious addictiveness, hardcore fun factor, and puzzle-based challenges. A must-have for TurboGrafx owners. Followed by: *Bubble Symphony* (arcade), *Bubble Memories* (arcade), *Bubble Bobble Revolution* (Nintendo DS), and various other sequels.

Power Golf

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft.
Sports/Golf, 1–3 players (alternating). 1989.

Although not on par (so to speak) with *PGA Tour Golf* for the Genesis, *Power Golf* is nevertheless a fine sports simulation, using a three-press swing meter to nice effect (the shot meter is super fast, giving even seasoned video golfers ample challenges). The game features three different camera angles (overhead, distant overhead, and behind-the-golfer), a 13-club golf bag, and three golfers (two males and a female) of varying skills in terms of power, control, and steadiness of swing. There are three modes of play: Stroke, Match, and Competition, the latter of which includes a target game and a driving contest. The action plays out on a standard, 18-hole, 72-par, 6621-yard golf course.

Psychosis

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Naxat Soft. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

This oddly themed, musically adept side-scroller has players piloting a ship through their own mind (consisting of a debris-ridden beach, a flowery cave, and three other levels), firing lasers, back lasers, wide beams, and thunder at an assortment of strange enemies, including a giant snake, a large rotting apple, haunted samurai masks, and a bevy of unnamable creatures. The ship is augmented by a pair of maneuverable satellites that add offensive and defensive power. Gameplay is much more pedestrian than the theme, and there’s noticeable flickering, making *Psychosis* a middle-of-the-road title. Definitely one of the lesser shooters for the system.

Raiden

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft.
Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Other than the absence of a two-player mode, *Raiden* for the TurboGrafx is a commendable port of Seibu Kaihatsu’s popular arcade game (1990). The playfield has been widened (unlike *Raiden Trad* for the Genesis, which employs a black bar on the side of the



Power Golf is one of the better sports games for the TurboGrafx.

screen), but level layout and enemy placement is much the same. Armed with bullets, lasers, missiles, and bombs, players fly their ship through eight levels of play, firing at wave after wave of enemies. When fully powered (by flying into weapon icons), the laser stream is especially impressive, cutting a wide swath through the air. Also released for the Atari Lynx and Atari Jaguar. Followed by: *Raiden II* (arcade), *Raiden DX* (arcade), *The Raiden Project* (PSX), *Raiden III* (PS2), *Raiden IV* (Xbox 360), and various other sequels.

R-Type

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Irem. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

R-Type is a remarkable port of Nintendo's 1987 coin-op classic. About the only thing missing is the two-player alternating mode. The game, which is a favorite among hardcore shooter fans, has players piloting a ship through eight tough levels (alien caverns and the like), firing laser beams at gunships, snake creatures, tentacled beasts, and other enemies. Terrific power-ups (including a deployable pod), boffo bosses, organic surroundings (including obstructions that must be shot through), and strategic shooting action (memorization is a must) make *R-Type* one of the best games of its, um, type. Also released for the Game Boy and Sega Master System. Followed by: *R-Type II* (arcade), *Super R-Type* (SNES), *R-Type III: The Third Lightning* (SNES, GBA), *R-Types* (PSX), *R-Type Final* (PS2), and various other sequels.

Samurai-Ghost

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1992.

In *Samurai-Ghost*, players control a big, sword-wielding redhead who looks nothing like a samurai. The enemies—skeletons, metal men, archers, floating eyeballs, and the like—are big as well, giving the game an unusual look. The sword is long, but limited in range, making for a bland weapon, and the game is filled with cheap, unavoidable hits. Throughout the game's levels, which include volcanoes, a swamp, beaches, ice lands, and forests, there

is some platforming action, but it's about as unimpressive as the stilted combat. *Samurai-Ghost* certainly looks much better than it plays.

Shockman

Publisher: NCS. Developer: NCS. Platform Shooter, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1992.

A poor man's *Gunstar Heroes* (Genesis) or *Mega Man* (NES), *Shockman* finds cybernetic humans Arnold and Sonya battling aliens, creatures, robots, and other forces of evil. The daring duo must run, jump (on platforms and over obstacles), and shoot their way through eight levels of play, dodging flames, riding elevators, confronting bosses (including a dinosaur), avoiding orbs, and much more. Grabbing batteries increases or fills up the player's life gauge while "bits" increase weapons strength. Both characters can fire standard Shockbeams, but combining forces unleashes a devastating Super Shockbeam. Supplementing the platforming action (which is sluggish, at least relative to the genre) are some fairly enjoyable side-scrolling shooter areas, both underwater and in the sky. *Shockman* is the sequel to *Kai-zou Choujin Schbibinman* for the PC Engine.

Side Arms Hyper Dyne

Publisher: Radiance Software. Developer: Radiance Software. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

Side Arms is different from most side-scrollers in that players can shoot left as well as right. The game also has an impressive arsenal of power-ups, including mega-ballistic lasers, eight-way firing (via a battlemech suit), and an orbital BIT that circles around the ship, giving it extra firepower. The first level (of 10) has players flying over a sea and a ruined city, but most of the creature-shooting action takes place underground. Regrettably, the game lacks the two-player simultaneous mode found in Capcom's 1986 arcade original.

Silent Debuggers

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Data East. First-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Viewed through the helmet of the protagonist, *Silent Debuggers* is an early FPS in which

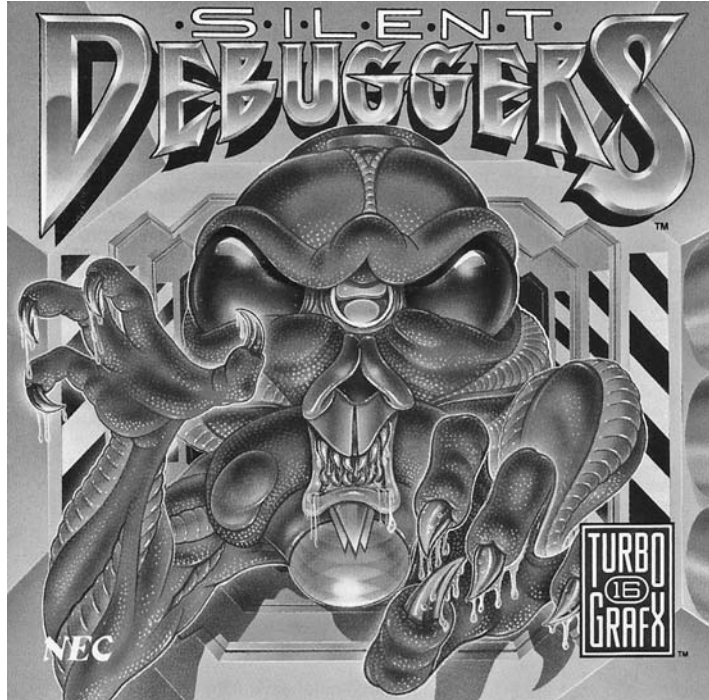
players move redundantly from room to room in a space station, aiming a gun sight and shooting huge, bug-like aliens. The “Silent Debugger” players control can maneuver left, right, forward, and back, but there is no ducking or strafing, making for a limited experience. Beast battles seem distant and impersonal, never really getting the adrenal pumping, and having to visit certain rooms to obtain ammunition and recharge your batteries is a hassle. Choppy visuals (thanks to a low frame rate) don’t help. In addition to space station rooms, the screen shows: a map; a time counter (featuring a 100-minute countdown); a color sensor and sound sensor

(warning of approaching enemies); back alert (warning of enemies approaching from behind); side alert (lighting up in the direction of enemies entering the player’s range of vision); and more. Players begin with a beam gun and can add the following items to their arsenal: motor cannon, mega beamer, lipp shot (homing gun), grenade launcher, sonic launcher, sleep launcher, night vision, muzzle adaptor (for doubling weapon strength), and more.

Sinistron

Publisher: NEC. Developer: IGS. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Sinistron is a typical (if solid) side-scrolling shooter in many ways, but it does have an unusual (and enjoyable) power-up system that opens the armored jaws on the player’s ship for three-way and five-way spread fire. When the jaws are open, however, it exposes the cockpit, leaving the ship vulnerable. Players begin the game armed with a Vulcan flame cannon and can pick up crystal-pulse lasers and heat-seek-



Silent Debuggers is an early (i.e. primitive) first-person shooter.

ing CHAOS missiles. In addition, there are invincible plasma droids that protect the ship from alien attacks above and below. Stages include: Mechanical, Gas Tunnel, Biological, Deep Space, Organs, and Cerebral Cortex. An energetic soundtrack complements the action.

Soldier Blade

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Hudson Soft. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

The follow-up to *Super Star Soldier* and the final game in the series, *Soldier Blade* is slightly faster than its progenitor, but a little easier. Players fly over various space stations and outer space vistas, dodging enemy fire while shooting a variety of swarming, swirling obstacles, including ships (large and small), cannons, jets, tanks, and space debris. There’s also a boss and a mini-boss in each of the game’s seven levels. The ship players pilot—the Soldier Blade—has a power-up system in which certain enemies leave behind color-coded pods when destroyed. The Soldier Blade

begins with red double bullets that fire straight up. It can then add diagonal bullets and bullets that shoot downward or upgrade to blue beams or green waves. Each weapon can be powered-up by grabbing pods. Powering up also gives players a wingman that adds extra firepower and can be used as a kamikaze-style special weapon. When said special weapon is used, or when the *Soldier Blade* is hit, the player's firepower is downgraded a notch. *Soldier Blade* is another in a long line of high quality shooters for the TurboGrafx. Shooting is near-constant, but without an overly frustrating degree of difficulty, and the game looks and plays like a topnotch shooter of the era.

Somer Assault

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Atlus. Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1992.

A highly original game, *Somer Assault* has players guiding a climbing, shooting, Slinky-like object through 12 nicely illustrated, maze-like levels (each containing a boss patterned after a sign of the zodiac), firing bullets at chess pieces and other enemies. The "Slinky" can stick to walls and jump over short gaps, but learning to control it skillfully takes practice (not mention patience). Players can grab power-ups, including invincibility, speed, triple shots, and ricochet fire, but finding the exit to each level can be a laborious, dead end-laden chore. Interestingly, when the player reaches the stage matching his or her sign of the zodiac (assuming a birth date was entered at the beginning of the game), an "unexpected bonus" will appear.

Sonic Spike World Championship Beach Volleyball

Publisher: NEC. Developer: IGS. Sports/Volleyball, 1–4 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Initially, *Sonic Spike* appears to be a quality title. It has nice, cartoon-like graphics, a variety of realistic moves (bump, spike, dig, jump, quick-fake), four-player action, three courts of difficulty, and coed gameplay featuring 24 athletes from six nations (Japan, China, Australia, Brazil, USA, and USSR). Unfortunately, an abundance of flaws, including lousy

controls and a scrolling screen that obscures a large part of the court at all times, make the game a big disappointment. For two-on-two volleyball from this era, players should stick with *Kings of the Beach* for the NES.

Space Harrier

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Sega. Third-Person Shooter, 1 player. 1989.

In *Space Harrier*, players view the action from behind the titular blonde extraterrestrial warrior, who flies through the air and runs along the ground through 18 colorful, pseudo-3D worlds, shooting (or avoiding) waves of creatures with such names as Crabbom, Evil Starfish, Cyborgman, and Demon Toad. There are also columns and totems to avoid and trees to burn down. The enemies appear in the distance and grow closer as the *Space Harrier* moves forward. There are also enemies that approach from behind. The checkerboard grounds (and sometimes skies) give the game a trippy look, but the shooting action is basic and repetitious (if mindlessly enjoyable). Despite garbled voice effects and some expected graphical downgrades, this is a solid port of Sega's 1985 arcade game, which was one of the best looking games of its time. Also released for the 32X, Master System, and Game Gear. Followed by: *Planet Harriers* (arcade, 2001).

Splatterhouse

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

The first home video game to sport a parental advisory warning ("The horrifying theme of this game may be inappropriate for young children ... and cowards"), *Splatterhouse* for the TurboGrafx isn't as bloody or as violent as the 1988 Namco arcade game (beheadings have been removed, for example), but it is a fun-filled scare fest that pays homage to a number of horror films, including *Friday the 13th* and *Reanimator*. Players guide the masked hero as he punches, kicks, and uses two-by-fours, cleavers, stones, shotguns, monkey wrenches, and spears against an assortment of demons, zombies, and other nasties through seven levels of play. The level four boss, which is an



A fun, horror-themed combat game, *Splatterhouse* spawned a pair of sequels for the Genesis.

inverted cross in the coin-op original, has been changed to a more politically correct ghostly skull. *Splatterhouse* helped pave the way for the *Resident Evil* series and other modern horror games. Followed by *Splatterhouse 2* and *Splatterhouse 3* for the Genesis. Remade in 3D for the PS3 and Xbox 360.

Super Star Soldier

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Vertical Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

The sequel to *Star Soldier* (NES), *Super Star Soldier* is a terrific shooter that presents a stiff, but fair (for the most part) challenge. Players fly the starship Neo Caesar through swarming ships, tanks, cannons, and other enemies, shooting, shooting, shooting, and shooting some more. The Neo Caesar is outfitted with homing missiles, super bombs, shields, and lasers, the latter of which are upgradeable (via floating orbs) with red multi-shot missiles, blue ring lasers, green spread fire, and yellow swing fire. There are eight levels of

exciting action, including deserts, space stations, and water worlds, most of which end with a large, nicely animated boss, such as a giant robot or a large ship that looks like the Millennium Falcon. The screen is almost always super busy in this game, but with no evidence of slowdown. A special mode of play called Caravan gives players two or five minutes to score as many points and advance as far as possible. One of many great shooters for the TurboGrafx-16, *Super Star Soldier* was followed by *Final Soldier* (Japan only, unless you count the Wii Virtual Console version) and *Soldier Blade*.

Super Volleyball

Publisher: NEC. Developer:

Video System. Sports/Volleyball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

One of two volleyball games released for the TurboGrafx-16 (*Sonic Spike* being the other), *Super Volleyball* lets players select from eight international squads. Or, gamers can create their own team according to jersey numbers (1–15), player names, uniform colors (16 in all), and the following player attributes: speed, block, return, and serve. There are four starters on each team (as opposed to six in real volleyball), plus two substitutes, and there are four types of serves. The game features an unusually low side-view of the action, and the computer has a tendency to bunch up the three non-serving players in a little grouping near the net. Solo action consists of single games or a tournament against the aforementioned international teams. Prior to starting a game, players can toggle beginning points, handicapping, and ball speed (normal, slow, or fast). A fairly accurate port of V-System's mediocre arcade game (1989), *Super Volleyball* was also released for the Genesis.

Takin' It to the Hoop

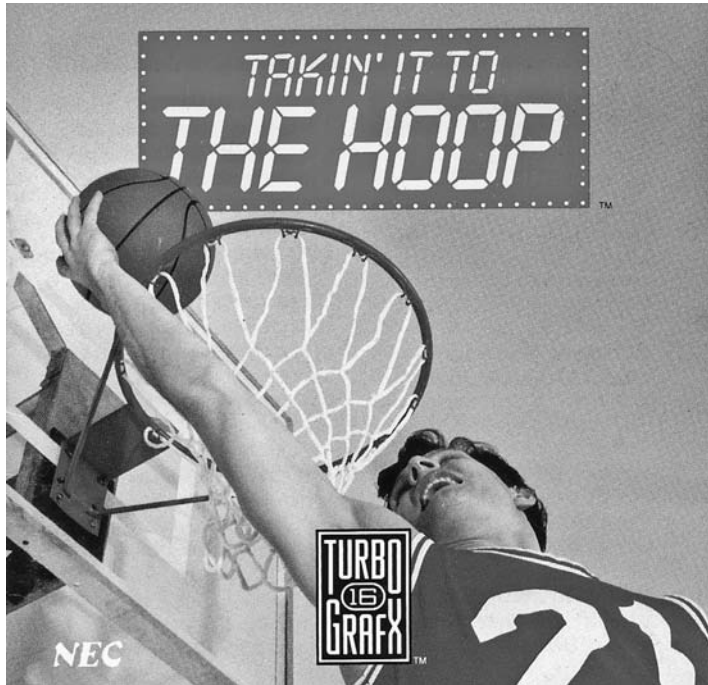
Publisher: NEC. Developer: Aicom. Sports/Basketball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Although it's better than *TV Sports Basketball*, *Takin' It to the Hoop* has its share of flaws, namely the inability for the player to control jumping for rebounds or blocked shots. Gamers can substitute for tired players, but this is more of a hassle than an asset. There are eight different generic teams (Seattle, Los Angeles, Dallas, Honolulu, Chicago, Boston, New York, and Miami), each containing 12 big-headed, cartoon-like players of varying abilities. Defensive strategies include zone, man-to-man, and zone plus man-to-man. Modes of play include Exhibition, League, and Tournament. As in the vastly superior *Double Dribble* (NES), *Hoop* boasts dunk close-ups, five-on-five action, and a side-view of a horizontally scrolling court.

TaleSpin

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Radiance Software/Interactive Designs. Side-Scrolling Platform, 1 player. 1991.

The TurboGrafx rendition of *TaleSpin* puts players in control of Baloo, who runs, jumps, and throws coconuts and snowballs at monkeys, panthers, penguins, fish, soldiers, and other enemies. Baloo will also shoot air from a hose (while walking under water), hop on bobbing hippos, ride elevators and conveyor belts, dodge thrown objects and falling fans, and grab items for extra lives, extra points, health, and temporary invincibility. Level five (of seven) veers away from the platforming action by having players fly the Sea Duck (vertical scrolling shooter) while level six puts gamers in control of Kit Cloudkicker. Levels



The five-on-five *Takin' It to the Hoop* features eight teams, three modes of play, and *Double Dribble*-like slam dunk animations.

include: The Watusi River Valley, Shere Khan's Aerodome, Ice Caves of Thembria, The Great Simeon Reef, Airwars, The Iron Vulture, and The Ionian Air City. This middle-of-the-road platformer is similar to the two-player Genesis version, but much different than the NES game (which is a side-scrolling shooter with no platforming). Based on the Disney cartoon, which began in 1990.

Tiger Road

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Victor Interactive Software. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1990.

In *Tiger Road*, players control a bald martial arts student who must travel through five multi-leveled stages (caves, temples, and the like), using a sword, a morningstar, and a sickle (the most effective weapon) to battle thugs and such bosses as Lizard Man and Evil Ghost Guardian. Occasionally, players can fly through an area, giving the game some variety, but cheap hits and frustrating pitfalls mar what could have been a fun game. The arcade ver-

sion (Capcom, 1987) has sharper graphics and better gameplay.

Time Cruise

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Face. Pinball, 1 player. 1992.

A colorful pinball simulator, *Time Cruise* features seven contiguous main boards, plus a nice variety of bonus stages with differing themes, such as stone-age, medieval, and futuristic. There's even a Dali-esque screen, complete with weirdly melting imagery. Unfortunately, the bonus stages, along with the rest of the game, are way too easy, letting users keep a single ball in play for entirely too long. In addition, *Time Cruise* lacks the realistic ball physics of *Devil's Crush* and *Alien Crush*, the two superior TurboGrafx pinball games.

Timeball

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Action Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

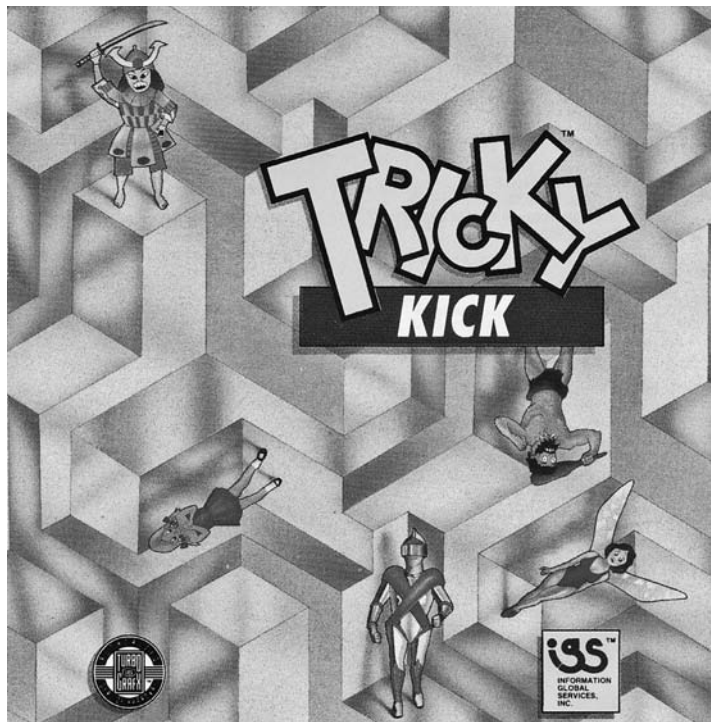
A bedeviling puzzler, *Timeball* was inspired by those cheap little plastic handheld games in which the player would slide plastic squares around to complete a picture (one space would be empty so the pieces could be slid around). Many of the squares in *Timeball* are solid gray or white (you're not actually trying to form a picture here), but some contain a section of pipe. Players must arrange the pieces so that the pipes will connect to allow a ball to roll through all of the pipes. Then it's on to the next screen, of which there are 100. There are four ball speeds (slow, normal, fast, tubular) and three musical settings (labyrinth, Olivia, silence), and players can create their own puzzles with an Edit mode. The graphics are about as plain

as you can get, and the game is extremely difficult. Luckily, passwords save progress. Somewhat similar to *Pipe Dream* for the NES, but far more frustrating.

Tricky Kick

Publisher: NEC. Developer: IGS. Action Puzzle, 1 player. 1990.

The aptly titled *Tricky Kick* is indeed a tricky game, even for seasoned puzzle fans (who will, no doubt, get a kick out of it). Each single-screen, non-scrolling maze is viewed from overhead, with gamers guiding a hero around the playfield, kicking two of the same type of object (usually a creature or a character) together in order to remove them from the screen. There are six heroes to play as, each of whom must make it through 10 themed areas, including: forest (bunnies, lions, etc.), haunted mansion (witches and the like), caveman (prehistoric creatures), school kid (cats, bullies, and more), and ancient Japan (Samurai and such). There are 120 puzzles in all. If you get stuck, you can give up and restart the level. In addi-



Tricky Kick boasts 120 puzzles, most of which are deviously difficult.

tion, players can recall the previous move. Fans of such sliding block puzzlers as *Shove It! ... The Warehouse Game* (Genesis) should enjoy *Tricky Kick*, but you might want to turn the repetitious music off—it can drive you bonkers while you are trying to think your way through each puzzle.

Turrican

Publisher: Ballistic. Developer: Accolade.
Platform Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Turrican is a hardcore platform shooter that will challenge gamers from the get-go. Players guide an armored warrior through four worlds of the lost space colony Alterra (10 levels total), performing tricky platform jumps (watch out for bottomless pits), avoiding hazards (such as spikes, laser cutters, and toxic waste), and firing laser bullets, laser blasts, mines, and grenades at mutated insects, fish, a giant fist (called The Gauntlet), a stone Monolith, and other enemies. Players can also wield a lightning whip and roll up into a buzz saw, the latter of which will remind Nintendo fans

of Samus's curl up maneuver in *Metroid*. Environments to explore include the exterior world of Alterra, beneath the surface of the planet, labyrinthine caverns, and more. Adapted from the 1990 Commodore 64 computer game. Also released for the Game Boy and Genesis. Followed by: *Mega Turrican* (Genesis), *Super Turrican* (SNES), and *Super Turrican 2* (SNES).

TV Sports Basketball

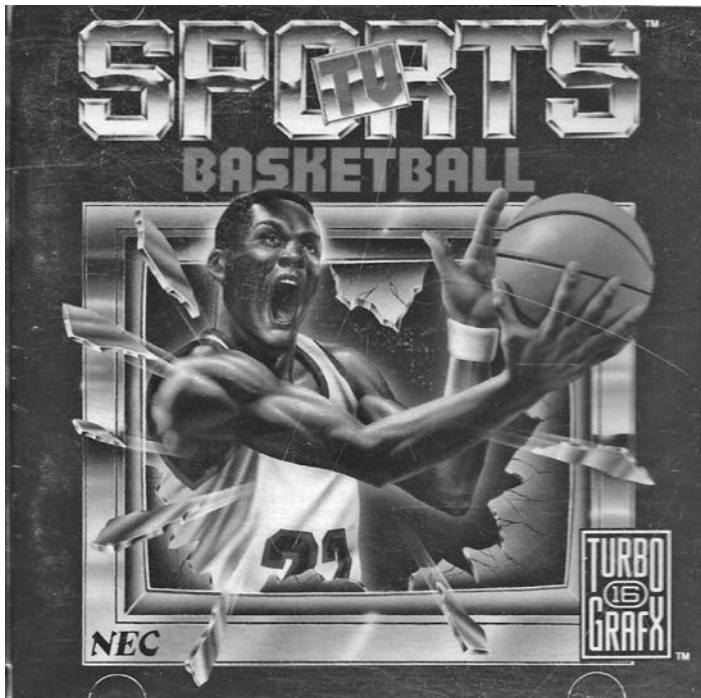
Publisher: NEC. Developer: Cinemaware.
Sports/Basketball, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1991.

TV Sports Basketball lets players select from eight fictional teams with names like Pirates, Snipers, and Zombies. The action is viewed primarily from half court (à la *One-on-One*), but briefly switches to a side view perspective when a player is actually crossing half court. Players are ranked according to such attributes as dribbling, passing, and shooting, and there are four offensive and four defensive plays. However, there are no loose ball fouls, opening tips, or dunk close-ups, and the game is clunky and not much fun to play (especially when played solo).

TV Sports Football

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Cinemaware. Sports/Football, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1990.

Viewed from an angled/overhead perspective, this vertically scrolling game offers four modes of play: Exhibition, League, Practice, and Demonstration. Players on each fictional team are rated according to speed, hands, strength, and agility. Unfortunately, running plays are largely ineffective, and passing up the middle is far too easy. Field goals are unblockable, and the computer handles kick-offs. *TV Sports Football* was



Thanks in large part to the poorly conceived *TV Sports* series, the TurboGrafx is not known as a good system for armchair athletes.

the first of three *TV Sports* titles brought over from home computers to the TurboGrafx. Unfortunately for NEC, the game was released the same year as the far superior *John Madden Football* for the Genesis.

TV Sports Hockey

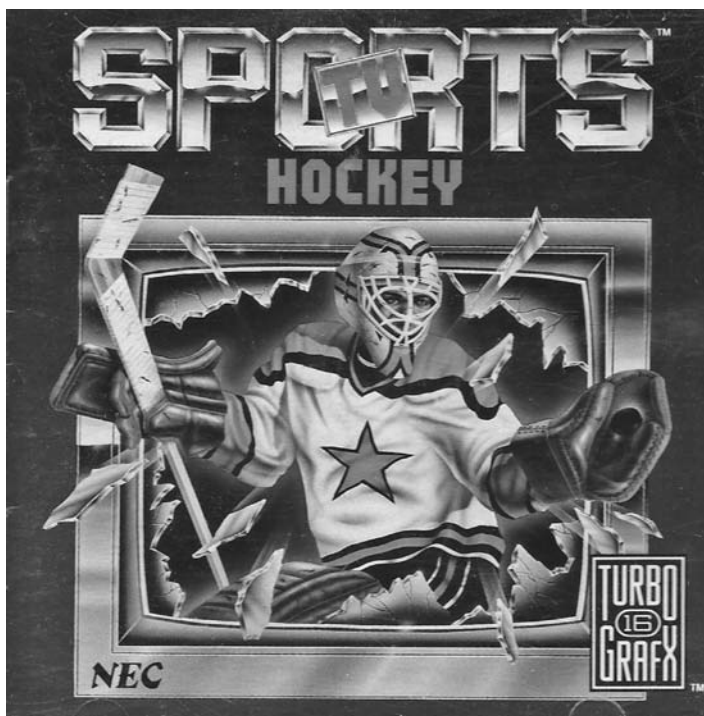
Publisher: NEC. Developer: Cinemaware. Sports/Hockey, 1–5 players (simultaneous). 1991.

TV Sports Hockey is plagued by numerous flaws, including slow gameplay, problematic face-offs (the puck just sits there at times), poor sound effects, lousy controls (passing is especially difficult), and a distinct lack of options. Like the vastly superior *Blades of Steel* (NES), this game does have fights (consisting of punching, blocking, and blood), but, unfortunately, this is easily the best aspect of the game. After penalties, the screen switches to the utterly superfluous Smiley McGill, a gap-toothed “former player” who comments on the call. Exhibition and Tournament modes available.

Veigues Tactical Gladiator

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Bits. Side-Scrolling Shooter, 1 player. 1990.

The year is 2324. Alien invaders have attacked all the cities along the Pacific coast, spurring players into action. As the screen scrolls automatically to the right (forced scrolling, it’s often called), players commandeer the robot fighting machine Veigues, rolling along the ground, jumping with tremendous hang time, and shooting at a variety of alien weaponry and airborne and ground-based vehicles. Veigues is equipped with three chest weapons (defense, laser, and Vulcan guns) and seven arm weapons: gauge gun, pulse laser cannon, assault gauge gun, plasma rifle, twin laser gun,



plasma cannon, and field punch system. As stated earlier, Veigues jumps, but there’s no real platforming involved, making the game a side-scrolling shooter instead of a platform shooter. Enemies tend to dole out cheap hits, but, thankfully, Veigues has shields. The action moves at a nice pace, there’s plenty of shooting, and the graphics are colorful and detailed. Parallax scrolling is icing on the visual cake. *Veigues Tactical Gladiator* is an unusual game with an odd name, but it’s a nice addition to any shooter fan’s TurboGrafx library.

Victory Run

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Sports Car Racing, 1 player. 1989.

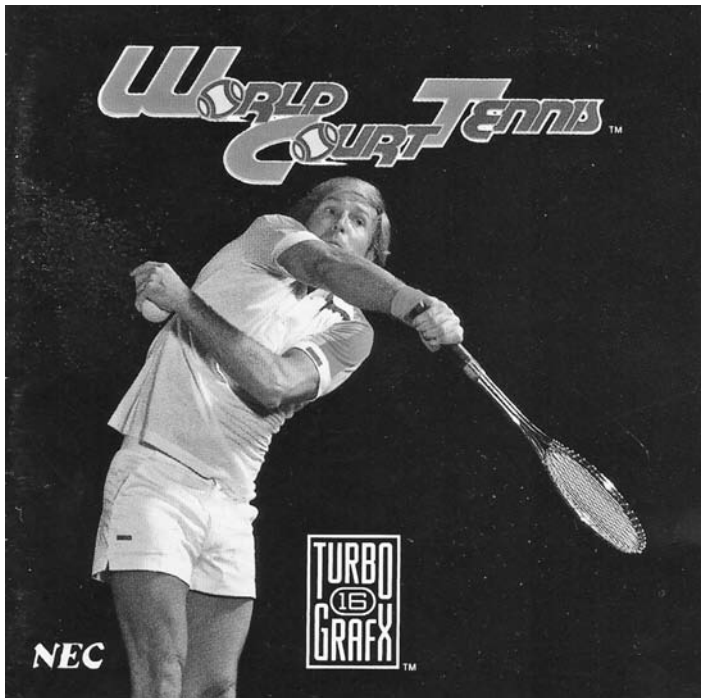
Beginning in France and ending in Senegal (for a total of eight stages), *Victory Run* is an arcade-style racer, supplemented by four-gear shifting and the need to strategically upgrade the car with tires, transmission systems, engine parts, suspension kits, and brakes. These items wear out depending on how the car is driven. Races take place day and night, and there are plenty of obstacles to avoid, including signs,

uneven terrain, oil slicks, and other vehicles (which are quite large in comparison to the player's car). *OutRun* fans looking for more complex gameplay should enjoy *Victory Run*, which is based on the Paris to Dakar Road Rally.

Vigilante

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Irem. Side-Scrolling Combat, 1 player. 1989.

Vigilante is a simplistic, though enjoyable beat-'em-up in which gamers guide the titular hero through five nice looking levels of street fighting action, punching and kicking an assortment of thugs, including guys who attack with chains, guns, iron pipes, knives, and motorcycles. The only weapon the player can pick up is a set of nunchuks, which are especially powerful when the Turbo button is employed. Unlike the Master System version, *Vigilante* for the TurboGrafx includes the references to Skinheads and Madonna found in Irem's 1988 arcade original. *Double Dragon* fans should enjoy *Vigilante*.



World Court Tennis is easily one of the best sports games for the TurboGrafx.

World Class Baseball

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Hudson Soft. Sports/Baseball, 1 or 2 players (simultaneous). 1989.

One of the better sports titles for the TurboGrafx, *World Class Baseball* lets players select from 12 teams, each bearing a fictional name, such as the Bangkok Buddhas or the Chicago Winds. The game sports the traditional behind-the-batter (with runner windows) and overhead (after the ball goes into play) viewing perspectives, and the pitching and batting are intuitive: players can aim pitches, move around the pitcher's mound and batter's box, and adjust the power of pitches and swings. Bases correspond with the d-pad: pressing down aims throws to home plate or sends the runner home, for example. Gamers can play against the computer or a friend, or enter a Pennant Mode that pits the player against the other teams in a playoff series. Other options and features include: Watch Mode, Edit Mode (change the starting order of your team), diving catches, pick-offs, pinch hitters, substitute pitchers, and the ability to change the position of the fielders.

World Court Tennis

Publisher: NEC. Developer: Namco. Sports/Tennis, 1-4 players (simultaneous). 1989.

While hardly a graphical marvel, *World Court Tennis* does play a fine game of tennis and is one of the better sports titles of the era. Gamers can play against the computer or a friend, or simply watch the computer play itself. Better yet, up to four players can compete in doubles action, including mixed doubles pitting men and against women (or a male and a female on either side). At times you'll wish the big-headed players were

quicker (and maybe less childish looking), but the game has excellent controls, letting players—using forehand and backhand—hit the ball hard or soft, lob or slice the ball, put topspin or English on the ball, or simply hit it straight with no spin. There are three different court surfaces: asphalt, clay, and grass. Plus, the game has a highly original RPG-style Quest Mode, in which players travel through cities, search for clues, use winnings to purchase new rackets, shirts, and shoes, and battle the king's minions (not to mention the king himself) in standard tennis action.

World Sports Competition

Publisher: Turbo Technologies, Inc. Developer: Hudson Soft. Sports/Olympics, 1–5 players (alternating, simultaneous). 1992.

Though not as polished as such similar titles as *California Games* and *Winter Games*, *World Sports Competition* does offer a whopping 18 different events spread over six categories: Track, Field, Swimming, Shooting, Rowing, and Archery. Gameplay consists primarily of pressing buttons as fast as possible in order to run or swim quickly, plus some cursor-

based shooting action in which players take aim at targets and fire. Qualifying is difficult, so frustration can be a factor.

Yo, Bro

Publisher: NEC. Developer: ICOM Simulations. Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter, 1 player. 1991.

Yo, Bro puts players in the role of a skateboarding bear, skating on the streets of six California cities. Instead of doing tricks (the bear can jump and spin, but that's about it), players use a slingshot and such special weapons as missiles, freeze rays, and rocket-propelled grenades to fire at aliens, rabbits, killer bees, rats, dogs, man-eating plants, and other creatures. While shooting enemies and skateboarding around buildings and down streets, players should avoid such obstacles as water puddles and potholes. Interestingly, the game's musical score consists of synthesized arrangements of four Beach Boys hits: "California Girls," "Help Me, Rhonda," "I Get Around," and "Fun, Fun, Fun." *Yo, Bro* is playable, but the controls could use some fine tuning.

APPENDIX I.

NEO GEO CD

The Console

Released in 1994, the Neo Geo CD, sporting a single-speed CD-ROM drive, was produced to give customers a cheaper alternative to the pricy Neo Geo cartridge-based system. Discs sold for approximately \$50 each, as opposed to \$250 or so apiece for cartridges. The console experienced poor distribution in the United States, making it tough to find today. Also, thanks to long load times and graphical downgrades (caused by the system's slow drive and limited RAM capacity), many disc games are inferior to their cartridge counterparts. On a more positive note, the CD games often have superior sound.

The Games

Aero Fighters 2 — Vertical scrolling airplane shooter similar to *1942*.
Aero Fighters 3 — Vertical scrolling airplane shooter with more outrageous weapons and bosses than *Aero Fighters 2*.
Aggressors of Dark Kombat — One-on-one fighting game with eight playable characters.
Alpha Mission II — Vertical scrolling shooter; sequel to *Alpha Mission* for the arcade and NES.
Art of Fighting — *Street Fighter II*-type one-on-one fighting game.
Art of Fighting 2 — *Street Fighter II*-type one-on-one fighting game that includes 12 playable fighters.
Art of Fighting 3: Path of the Warrior — *Street*

Fighter II-type one-on-one fighting game, downgraded some from the cartridge version.

Baseball Stars Professional — Arcade-style baseball with 16 teams comprised of males and females.

Baseball Stars 2 — Sequel to *Baseball Stars Professional* with upgraded graphics, sounds, and animation.

Blue's Journey — Side-scrolling platformer with pastel coloring; players control an elf.

Burning Fight — Side-scrolling combat similar to (but not as well received as) *Final Fight*.

Bust-A-Move — Match three or more bubbles to clear them from the screen; port of 1993 Taito arcade action puzzle classic.

Crossed Swords — First-person hack-and-slash action; gain experience by killing skeletons, knights, and other enemies.

Cyber-Lip — Platform shooter similar to *Contra* and *Metal Slug*.

Double Dragon — One-on-one fighter based on 1994 film; different than the side-scrolling combat games in the *Double Dragon* franchise.

Fatal Fury — One-on-one fighting game similar to *Street Fighter II*, but with two-plane maneuvering among the fighters.

Fatal Fury Special — Similar to *Fatal Fury 2*, but with more fighters.

Fatal Fury 2 — Similar to *Fatal Fury*, but with desperation moves and more fighters.

Fatal Fury 3: Road to the Final Victory — The sequel to *Fatal Fury Special*.

- Football Frenzy — Top-down, arcade-style, grid-iron action.
- Galaxy Fight — One-on-one fighting game with no boundaries to the left or right.
- Ghost Pilots — Airplane shooter similar to *1942* (sans looping maneuver).
- Kabuki Klash — One-on-one fighting game set in mythical Jipang, which is similar to Japan; includes eight playable characters.
- Karnov's Revenge — *Street Fighter II*-like fighting game, called *Fighter's History Dynamite* in Europe and Japan.
- The King of Fighters '94 — One-on-one fighting game similar to *Street Fighter II*, but with three-character teams.
- The King of Fighters '95 — Adds Team Edit mode to fighting action.
- The King of Fighters '96 — Adds fighting team of Geese Howard and Wolfgang Krauser from *Fatal Fury* and Mr. Big from *Art of Fighting*.
- The King of Fighters '97 — Includes *Fatal Fury* veterans Billy Kane, Ryuji Yamazaki, and Blue Mary as a team of fighting musicians.
- The King of Fighters '98 — Features more than 50 fighters from previous entries in the series.
- The King of Fighters '99 — Includes new characters K', Maxima, Bao, Whip, Krizalid, and a pair of Kyo clones.
- King of the Monsters 2 — Includes fighting action and side-scrolling combat levels with Godzilla-influenced characters.
- The Last Blade — Weapons-based fighter similar to *Samurai Shodown*.
- The Last Blade 2 — Similar to cartridge version, but with long load times.
- Last Resort — Side-scrolling shooter similar to *R-Type*.
- League Bowling — Similar to *Super Bowling* for the SNES.
- Magical Drop II — Action puzzle in which players throw balloons to match them by color (three or more) so they'll disappear.
- Magician Lord — Tough platform shooter in which playable magician can transform into other characters.
- Mahjong Kyo Retsuden — Based on the classic mahjong tile game.
- Metal Slug — Platform shooter similar to *Contra*; features upgraded music over cartridge version.
- Metal Slug 2 — Platform shooter featuring more weapons than first game, plus two playable female characters.
- Mutation Nation — Side-scrolling combat against mutants.
- Nam-1975 — Aim machine gun cursor to shoot soldiers, tanks, helicopters, and other enemies.
- Neo DriftOut: New Technology — Top-down rally racer with sharp turns and lots of drifting.
- Neo Turf Masters — Golf game with three 18-hole courses: U.S., Germany, and Japan.
- Ninja Combat — Side-scrolling combat with shuriken, swords, axes, and other weapons.
- Ninja Commando — Overhead-view, free-roaming, run-and-gun shooter.
- Ninja Master's — One-on-one fighting game set in Feudal Japan.
- Over Top — Top-down racing on streets and different types of terrain.
- Pleasure Goal Street Soccer 5-on-5 — Top-down soccer with scrolling/horizontal playfield.
- Power Spikes 2 — Futuristic, side-view volleyball.
- Pulstar — Side-scrolling shooter similar to *Gradius* and *R-Type*.
- Puzzled — Action puzzler inspired by *Tetris*.
- Ragnagard — One-on-one, tournament-style fighting game.
- Real Bout Fatal Fury — One-on-one, tournament-style fighting game; the fifth in the *Fatal Fury* series.
- Real Bout Fatal Fury Special — One-on-one, tournament-style fighting game; the sequel to *Real Bout Fatal Fury*.
- Real Bout Fatal Fury 2: The Newcomers — One-on-one, tournament-style fighting game; the sequel to *Real Bout Fatal Fury Special*.
- Riding Hero — Motorcycle racer similar to Sega's *Hang On*.
- Robo Army — Side-scrolling combat game similar to *Final Fight*.
- Samurai Shodown — One-on-one, weapons-based fighting game.
- Samurai Shodown II — Upgraded over the original game with better graphics and more moves.
- Samurai Shodown III: Blades of Blood — Includes two versions of each selectable fighter.
- Samurai Shodown IV: Amakusa's Revenge — Includes 17 playable characters.
- Savage Reign — One-on-one fighting game similar to *Street Fighter II*, but with weapons.
- Sengoku — Side-scrolling combat, some of which takes place in war-torn Japan; includes two-player simultaneous action.
- Sengoku 2 — Side-scrolling combat taking place in Japan, World War II era Europe, and other

- locales; includes two-player simultaneous mode.
- Soccer Brawl — Futuristic soccer in which players can kick the ball hard enough to knock the other player down.
- Stakes Winner — Guide one of eight different horses as they run around a track.
- Street Hoop — Three-on-three, arcade-style basketball influenced by *NBA Jam*.
- Super Baseball 2020 — Futuristic baseball with robots, landmines, and upgradable armor.
- Super Sidekicks — Top-down soccer featuring 12 international teams.
- Super Sidekicks 2 — Improves upon the first game with better graphics and 48 teams.
- Super Sidekicks 3 — Adds regional tournaments to the soccer formula and includes 64 teams.
- The Super Spy — First-person action; punch, kick, and use knife on enemies.
- Thrash Rally — Off-road racing in which players drive a sand buggy, an off-road bike, a semi truck, or one of several cars.
- 3 Count Bout — Wrestling game featuring 10 different fighters.
- Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy — Guide a male or a female through various worlds, using a retractable arm as a weapon and tool.
- Top Player's Golf — Lets players select from four golfers, two courses, and three modes of play: Stroke, Match, and Nassau.
- Twinkle Star Sprites — Vertical scrolling shooter with puzzle-like, split-screen action in which shooting several enemies can create combos that affect other player's screen.
- Viewpoint — Shooter similar to Sega's arcade classic, *Zaxxon*.
- Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer — One-on-one fighting game similar to *Art of Fighting* and *Fatal Fury*.
- Windjammers — Top-down game based on Frisbee tennis.
- World Heroes — *Street Fighter II*-style fighting game augmented by a Death Match mode featuring mines, spikes, and fire.
- World Heroes Perfect — This fourth game in the *World Heroes* series adds a hero gauge for extra-powerful attacks.
- World Heroes 2 — Features new fighting moves and more characters than first game.
- World Heroes 2 Jet — This *World of Heroes 2* sequel drops the Death Match mode, but features two new characters (for a total of 16).
- Zintrick — Action puzzler similar to *Puyo Puyo*, but with a horizontal playfield.

APPENDIX II.

SEGA CD

The Console

The Sega CD is an add-on peripheral for the Sega Genesis system. Released in 1992, the CD-ROM-based unit boasts games with rotation, scaling, full-motion video clips, CD-quality audio, and other such upgrades over standard Genesis cartridges. Despite these features, and despite the release of such quality titles as *Sonic CD* and *Final Fight CD*, the Sega CD is often ridiculed for its plethora of titles with grainy (and oftentimes cheesy) full-motion video.

The Games

The Adventures of Batman & Robin — Demolition/combat racing based on cartoon; drive the Batmobile; shoot enemies; fly Batwing in final stage.

The Adventures of Willy Beamish — Third-person adventure based on 1991 computer game.

After Burner III — Flight combat simulator based on Japanese *Strike Fighter* arcade game.

AH3 Thunderstrike — 10-mission flight combat simulator with helicopter.

The Amazing Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin — 65 levels of side-scroller platform action starring Marvel's Webbed Wonder.

Android Assault: The Revenge of Bari-Arm — Side-scrolling shooter with power-ups and some horizontal stages.

A/X-101 — Space combat simulator in which players fire laser cannons and fusion warheads.

Batman Returns — Side-scrolling combat similar to Genesis version, but with driving levels.

Battle Frenzy — First-person shooter released by Good Deal Games in 2003.

Battlecorps — First-person shooter with mechs.

BC Racers — *Super Mario Kart*-style racing designed for six-button controller.

Bill Walsh College Football — Four-player gridiron action endorsed by former San Francisco 49ers coach.

Black Hole Assault — One-on-one fighting with robots.

Bouncers — Basketball game in which the player is the ball, featuring voice acting by Mark Hamill.

Bram Stoker's Dracula — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1993 feature film.

Brutal: Paws of Fury — Cute fighting game upgraded over Genesis version with FMV and more characters.

Bug Blasters: The Exterminators — Good Deal Games FMV release from 2001 in which players shoot giant bugs.

Burning Fists: Force Striker — *Street Fighter II*-style fighting game released by Good Deal Games in 2006.

Cadillacs and Dinosaurs: The Second Cataclysm — Driving/shooting game based on comic book series.

Championship Soccer '94 — Features 100 teams, 90+ sound effects, substitutions, and more.

Chuck Rock — Side-scrolling platformer featuring caveman with belly attack and jump-kicks;

- enhanced over Genesis version with animated intros, superior audio, and more levels.
- Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck — Use club to battle enemies; enhanced over Genesis version with animated intros, superior audio, and more levels.
- Citizen X — Side-scrolling platform/combat action supplemented by FMV; released by Good Deal Games in 2002.
- Cliffhanger — Side-scrolling combat based on 1993 film; upgraded over Genesis version with CD sound, snowboarding levels, and full-motion video clips.
- Cobra Command — First-person helicopter shooter based on 1984 Data East arcade game.
- Corpse Killer — Light gun shooter also released for the 32X.
- Crime Patrol — Light gun shooter based on 1993 American Laser Games coin-op.
- Dark Wizard — Turn-based strategy on a hexagon-based battlefield.
- Demolition Man — Platform shooter based on 1993 Sylvester Stallone/Wesley Snipes film.
- Double Switch — Interactive movie starring Corey Haim and Debbie “Blondie” Harry; music by Thomas Dolby.
- Dracula Unleashed — Interactive movie taking place 10 years after Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* novel.
- Dragon’s Lair — A nice port of the highly popular 1983 Cinematronics laser disc arcade game.
- Dune — First-person adventure based on 1984 David Lynch film.
- Dungeon Explorer — Third-person top-down action RPG designed for one to four players.
- Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep — First-person action RPG with real-time combat.
- Earthworm Jim Special Edition — Enhanced version of *Earthworm Jim* with new worlds and hidden areas, a new weapon, better animation and sound, and two new endings.
- Ecco the Dolphin — Action/adventure game; has better sound than Genesis version and five new levels.
- Ecco: The Tides of Time — Action/adventure game; similar to Genesis version, but with superior graphics and sounds.
- ESPN Baseball Tonight — Enhanced over Genesis version with more than 10 minutes of video footage.
- ESPN National Hockey Night — Enhanced over Genesis version with full-motion video of actual NHL games.
- ESPN NBA Hang Time ’95 — *NBA Jam*-inspired two-on-two basketball with full-motion video of Dan Patrick.
- ESPN Sunday Night NFL — Includes commentary from Chris Berman and Mike Patrick and FMV intros for all 28 NFL teams.
- Eternal Champions: Challenge from the Dark Side — Upgrade over Genesis *Eternal Champions* with superior graphics and sounds and more characters, fatalities, and finishing moves.
- Fahrenheit — Interactive movie with two discs: Sega CD version and 32X CD version.
- Fatal Fury Special — Nice port of SNK’s 1993 arcade fighting game.
- FIFA International Soccer — Port of Genesis game supplemented by video clips and superior audio.
- Final Fight CD — Nice port of *Final Fight*, the 1989 side-scrolling combat coin-op from Capcom.
- Flashback: The Quest for Identity — Adventure puzzle with more voice effects and better music than the computer and Genesis versions.
- Flink — Side-scrolling platformer with 55 levels and 13 mixable spells.
- Formula One World Championship: Beyond the Limit — Includes 16 international circuits, FMV from Fuji TV show, and pit crew voices.
- Frog Feast — *Frog Bog*-like game released in 2005 by Rastersoft.
- Ground Zero Texas — Light gun shooter developed by Digital Pictures of *Night Trap* fame.
- Heart of the Alien: Out of this World Parts I and II — Includes the original *Out of This World*, plus a sequel; tons of puzzles and obstacles.
- Heimdall — Point-and-click isometric RPG with three worlds to explore.
- Hook — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1991 Steven Spielberg feature film; also released on 3 *Ninjas Kick Back/Hook*.
- Iron Helix — Explore maze-like corridors of ship as robot probe in this first-person adventure.
- Jaguar XJ220 — Sports car racer with two-player split-screen action and 20 competitors.
- Jeopardy! — Trivia game show hosted via full-motion video of Alex Trebek.
- Joe Montana’s NFL Football — Upgraded over the Genesis version with FMV clips of Montana.
- Jurassic Park — First-person adventure based on 1993 film; much different than Genesis game.
- Keio Flying Squadron — Side-scrolling shooter; a sequel was released for the Saturn.
- Kids on Site — Interactive movie; control excavator, bulldozer, steamroller, and wrecking ball.

- The Lawnmower Man — Based on 1992 film; features 10 game styles and FMV from the movie.
- Lethal Enforcers — Konami light gun shooter based on 1992 arcade game.
- Lethal Enforcers II: Gun Fighters — Konami light gun shooter set in the Old West; based on 1994 coin-op.
- Links: The Challenge of Golf — Features six-player action, Ben Wright commentary, Steve Ellington tips, and Torrey Pines course.
- Loadstar: The Legend of Tully Bodine — Space combat simulator starring Ned Beatty and Barry Primus.
- Lords of Thunder — Side-scrolling shooter with cyclones, lightning, lava, and flaming dragons as weapons.
- Lunar: Eternal Blue — Sequel to *Lunar: The Silver Star* with more than 50 minutes of cartoon-style animation.
- Lunar: The Silver Star — Third-person RPG in which players battle monsters, explore dungeons, and gather info.
- Mad Dog McCree — Light gun shooter based on 1990 American Laser Games coin-op.
- Mad Dog II: The Lost Gold — Light gun shooter based on 1992 American Laser Games coin-op.
- Make My Video: INXS — Edit videos for three INXS hits: “Heaven Sent,” “Baby Don’t Cry,” and “Not Enough Time.”
- Make My Video: Kriss Kross — Edit videos for three Kriss Kross hits: “Jump,” “Warm It Up,” and “I Missed the Bus.”
- Make My Video: Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch — Edit videos for three Marky Mark hits: “Good Vibrations,” “You Gotta Believe,” and “I Need Money.”
- Mansion of Hidden Souls — First-person adventure; explore mansion via full motion video.
- Marko — Released in 2003 by Good Deal Games, *Marko* is a side-scrolling platformer with a soccer ball for a weapon.
- Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein/Bram Stoker’s Dracula — Two-game compilation featuring games based on 1994 film and 1992 film respectively.
- The Masked Rider: Kamen Rider ZO — Interactive movie starring half man/half insect who punches, kicks, rides a Z-Cycle; based on Japanese TV series.
- MegaRace — Futuristic racer with TV show theme.
- Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse — Side-scrolling platformer upgraded over Genesis version with one extra level and better graphics and sounds.
- Microcosm — Behind-the-ship-view shooter with *Fantastic Voyage*-type theme.
- Midnight Raiders — Interactive movie similar to *Tomcat Alley*, but with helicopter instead of F-14.
- Mighty Mighty Missile! — Cat-and-mouse puzzler released by Good Deal Games in 2004.
- Mighty Morphin Power Rangers — Interactive movie based on television series.
- Mortal Kombat — Violent fighting game based on controversial 1992 arcade classic; played role in home video game industry adopting ESRB ratings.
- My Paint: The Animated Paint Program — Interactive animated art program with freehand action, 1,000 sound effects, and more than 200 built-in images.
- NBA Jam — Based on Midway’s 1993 arcade game; upgraded over Genesis version with more animation, halftime FMV, voice effects, and, unfortunately, long load times.
- NFL Football Trivia Challenge — Pat Summerall poses 1,500 questions; includes 300 FMV clips and 1,200 still images.
- NFL’s Greatest: San Francisco vs. Dallas 1978–1993 — Coach FMV teams featuring such players as Joe Montana, Jerry Rice, Steve Young, Roger Staubach, Troy Aikman, and Emmitt Smith.
- NHL ’94 — The only EA Sports hockey title for the Sega CD; includes Exhibition, Playoffs, and Shootout; four-player action.
- Night Trap — Interactive movie starring Dana Plato; achieved infamy as one of the titles scrutinized by the government during the 1990s congressional hearings, which ultimately led to the ESRB ratings for video games.
- Novastorm — 18 stages of third-person, behind-the-ship-view, outer space shooter action.
- Panic! — Third-person adventure puzzle featuring switches, buttons, famous places and faces, and more than 1,000 different scenes.
- Pitfall! The Mayan Adventure — Side-scrolling platformer featuring more levels and better animation and sound than the Genesis version; includes original Atari 2600 *Pitfall!*
- Popful Mail — Side-scrolling platformer with RPG elements; includes three hours of spoken dialogue.
- Power Factory featuring C+C Music Factory — Edit C+C Music Factory videos; similar to *Make My Video* titles.
- Power Monger — Explore and conquer 195 worlds; generate unlimited random worlds.

- Prince of Persia — Labyrinthine, multi-platform side-scroller with hundreds of movie clips.
- Prize Fighter — First-person, FMV boxing game directed by Ron Stein (creator of boxing scenes in *Rocky* and *Raging Bull*).
- Puggsy — Side-scrolling platformer with 50+ levels, 17 worlds, 40 usable objects, and more than 100 different creatures.
- Racing Aces — Air combat racing with 30 pilots to portray, nine fighters to fly, 40+ courses, and repairs, planes, and weapons to purchase.
- Radical Rex — Side-scrolling platformer featuring tyrannosaurus on a skateboard.
- RDF Global Conflict — First-person 3D tank shooter in which players fire a cannon and laser-guided missiles.
- Revenge of the Ninja — Interactive movie similar to *Dragon's Lair*; features 15 levels.
- Revenagers of Vengeance — One-on-one fighting game with RPG elements and 10 playable fighters.
- Rise of the Dragon — First-person point-and-click adventure set in 2053; players portray a private investigator.
- Road Avenger — Interactive movie similar to *Dragon's Lair*, but with the player driving a sports car.
- Road Rash — Demolition/combat motorcycle game with weapons, five California courses, and 15 bikes; includes digitized graphics and FMV cut scenes.
- Robo Aleste — Eight-level, vertical scrolling shooter similar to *MUSHA* for the Genesis.
- Samurai Shodown — One-on-one, weapons-based fighter with 12 playable characters; port of 1993 SNK arcade game.
- The San Diego Zoo Presents ... The Animals! — Educational game that includes 300+ animal and habitat exhibits, 80 FMV clips, 1300+ photos, tons of articles, scientific data, and more.
- The Secret of Monkey Island — Third-person point-and-click adventure with hundreds of items to examine and locations to explore.
- Sega Classics Arcade Collection 4-in-1 — Includes ports of Genesis games *Columns*, *Golden Axe*, *Revenge of Shinobi*, and *Streets of Rage*.
- Sega Classics Arcade Collection 5-in-1 — Includes ports of Genesis games *Columns*, *Golden Axe*, *Revenge of Shinobi*, *Streets of Rage*, and *Super Monaco GP*.
- Sewer Shark — FMV first-person shooter; guide crosshair around screen, aim and shoot targets in sewer tunnels.
- Shadow of the Beast II — Side-scrolling combat with puzzles, hidden traps, FMV, and six monster-infested worlds.
- Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective — Interactive movie; point-and-click adventure starring Arthur Conan Doyle's literary creation.
- Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective Vol. II — Interactive movie; point-and-click adventure; examine clues and question suspects.
- Shining Force CD — Strategy RPG with four adventures, 20+ character classes, and 50+ battles.
- Silpheed — 2D vertical shooter with 3D outer space backgrounds, 11 stages, and selectable weapons: graviton bomb, EM defense system, photon torpedo, and anti-matter bomb.
- Slam City with Scottie Pippen — First-person FMV basketball title starring Chicago Bulls legend.
- Snatcher — First-person point-and-click adventure set in Neo Kobe City, Japan.
- The Software Toolworks' Star Wars Chess — Battle chess with *Star Wars* characters.
- Sol-Feace — Six-level side-scrolling shooter with upgradable weapons that fire up, down, forward, back, and more.
- Sonic CD — *Sonic the Hedgehog* sequel with rotating, scaling, CD-quality sound, and time travel.
- Soulstar — Third-person 3D shooter with more than 40 missions across six planets.
- Space Ace — *Dragon's Lair*-like interactive movie based on 1984 Cinematronics laser disc coin-op.
- The Space Adventure — Interactive SF graphic novel starring space pirate Cobra; based on Japanese anime.
- Star Strike — First-person FMV space shooter released by Good Deal Games in 2001.
- Star Wars: Rebel Assault — Features 15 levels of shooting and flying; includes three vehicles to commandeer: T-16 Skyhopper, X-wing starfighter, and A-wing starfighter.
- Starblade — First-person outer space shooter based on 1991 Namco coin-op.
- Stellar-Fire — Futuristic, first-person, tank-like moon battles with polygonal graphics; includes intro narration by Michael "Lt. Worf" Dorn.
- Supreme Warrior — FMV fighting game with 12 real martial artist opponents.
- Surgical Strike — FMV shooter; fire a 30MM Gatling gun and laser-guided rockets at terrorists.
- The Terminator — Platform shooter upgraded

- over Genesis version with original Tommy Tallarico soundtrack, full-motion video, and new levels.
- Third World War — Strategy war game with isometric perspective.
- 3 Ninjas Kick Back/Hook — Two-game disc featuring side-scrollers based on 1994 and 1991 films respectively.
- Time Gal — Sixteen-level interactive movie similar to *Dragon's Lair*.
- Tomcat Alley — Seven full-motion video missions against air and ground targets.
- Trivial Pursuit — Popular board game augmented with photos, animations, audio questions and answers, and video footage of movies, TV shows, news events, sports, speeches, and more.
- Ultraverse Prime/Microcosm — Side-scrolling, *Double Dragon*-style combat starring Malibu Comics' muscle-bound Prime; packaged with previously released shooter, *Microcosm*.
- Vay — Third-person RPG with varied towns to explore and more than 100 monsters to fight.
- Wheel of Fortune — Spin wheel; guess letters to spell words and phrases; features FMV Vanna White and more than 6,000 puzzles; 1–3 players.
- Who Shot Johnny Rock? — FMV light gun shooter set during the gangster days of the 1930s.
- Wild Woody — Side-scrolling platformer; control pencil that erases enemies and draws bombs, mermaids, cyclones, ghosts, and other helpful items.
- Wing Commander — Space combat simulator with 40 missions, digitized speech, four playable ships (Hornet, Scimitar, Rapier, and Raptor), character interaction, and multiple camera angles.
- Wirehead — Interactive movie with car chases, barroom brawls, waterfall rafting, branching, multiple paths, and 80+ minutes of live video.
- Wolfchild — Side-scrolling combat against mutants; features 10 levels and maze and puzzle elements.
- Wonder Dog — Cartoonish, quickly paced, side-scrolling platformer with more than 400 enemies.
- World Cup USA 94 — Four-player soccer featuring 24 teams, nine stadiums, a World Cup trivia quiz, and World Cup versions of rock songs “No Pain No Gain” and “Under the Sun.”
- WWF Rage in the Cage — The only wrestling game for Sega CD; includes Bret Hart and 29 other WWF wrestlers.

APPENDIX III.

SEGA 32X

The Console

Released in November of 1994, the Sega 32X is a cartridge-based add-on for the Sega Genesis console. It plugs into the top of the Genesis via the cartridge port. The games are generally a little better looking and sounding than standard Genesis carts, but the peripheral failed due to its small library, underperformance (relative to the hype), and the impending release of a new Sega console: the Saturn.

The Games

After Burner — Third-person F-14 Tomcat shooter based on 1987 Sega coin-op; includes cockpit and behind-the-plane views, and day and night sequences.

The Amazing Spider-Man: Web of Fire — Hard-to-find side-scrolling combat starring Marvel's Webbed Wonder; Daredevil guest-stars.

BC Racers — *Super Mario Kart*-type racer set in prehistoric times; includes two-player split-screen action.

Blackthorne — Platform shooter with 20 levels, new animations, 32,000 colors, and digitized sound.

Brutal: Above the Claw — Fighting game; sequel to *Brutal: Paws of Fury*; includes 12 playable, anthropomorphic animal characters and lots of special moves.

Corpse Killer (CD) — Marked "Sega Genesis 32X CD" on the packaging, meaning it's a compact

disc that requires a Sega CD as well as a Genesis and 32X; first-person light gun FMV shooter; port of the Sega CD game.

Cosmic Carnage — *Street Fighter II*- and *Mortal Kombat*-influenced fighter with eight opponents on eight worlds.

Doom — 24-meg port of Id's groundbreaking 1993 first-person shooter; includes 17 levels, but no multi-player mode.

Fahrenheit (CD) — Interactive movie; the package includes two discs— one specifically for the Sega CD, and one for the 32X using the disc drive on the Sega CD.

Golf Magazine Presents 36 Great Holes Starring Fred Couples — Create and name up to 24 players; includes Practice, Match, Stroke, Tournament, Shoot Out, Skins, and Scramble.

Knuckles' Chaotix — Odd *Sonic the Hedgehog* offshoot in which players are tethered to a computer- or human-controlled character through side-scrolling platform worlds.

Kolibri — Vertical and horizontal scrolling shooter in which players control a humming bird that fires such weapons as lasers, cluster bombs, and spread shots.

Metal Head — Giant robot sim with polygonal graphics, radar tracking, missiles, and chain guns.

Mortal Kombat II — Port of the controversial 1993 arcade game; upgraded over the Genesis version with better voice effects and graphics.

Motocross Championship — Motorcycle racer similar to (but not as well received as) *Road Rash*.

- NBA Jam Tournament Edition — Four-player two-on-two basketball; upgraded over Genesis version with bigger players, sharper graphics, and more.
- NFL Quarterback Club — Football game starring Steve Young, Dan Marino, John Elway, and other stars; includes 430 plays.
- Night Trap (CD) — Marked “Sega Genesis 32X CD” on the packaging, meaning it’s a compact disc that requires a Sega CD as well as a Genesis and 32X; port of the controversial FMV Sega CD game starring Dana Plato; enhanced with 32,768 colors (as opposed to 64 in the Sega CD version).
- Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure — Drastic updating of *Pitfall!*, the Atari 2600 side-scrolling classic.
- Primal Rage — Dinosaur-based one-on-one fighter; port of 1994 arcade game.
- RBI Baseball ’95 — Includes real MLB players, 162-game season, and 28 stadiums.
- Shadow Squadron — Space combat sim with two-player simultaneous action (pilot and gunner); select from two ships that dive, roll, bank, loop, and shoot.
- Slam City with Scottie Pippen (CD) — Marked “Sega Genesis 32X CD” on the packaging, meaning it’s a compact disc that requires a Sega CD as well as a Genesis and 32X; first-person basketball game starring the former Chicago Bulls superstar.
- Space Harrier — Third-person 3D shooter based on Sega’s 1985 arcade classic (running and jet-pack wearing player is viewed from behind).
- Star Trek: Starfleet Academy — Starship Bridge Simulator — Space combat sim with polygonal graphics and five Federation ships.
- Star Wars Arcade — Space combat sim based on 1993 Sega arcade game.
- Supreme Warrior (CD) — Marked “Sega Genesis 32X CD” on the packaging, meaning it’s a compact disc that requires a Sega CD as well as a Genesis and 32X; first-person FMV kung-fu game in which players punch, kick, and block.
- T-MEK — First-person tank shooter; features six hovercraft vehicles to commandeer; fire missiles, lasers, acid drones, and more.
- Tempo — Music-themed side-scrolling platformer with rock, rap, and folk tunes that change tempo.
- Toughman Contest — Boxing game similar to (but not as well received as) *Punch-Out!!*
- Virtua Fighter — 3D fighter with polygonal graphics; based on Sega’s 1993 arcade classic.
- Virtua Racing Deluxe — Polygonal racer featuring five tracks, three drivable cars, and two-player split-screen action; based on 1992 Sega arcade game.
- World Series Baseball Starring Deion Sanders — 24-meg game with Exhibition, Full Season, Playoff, and Home Run Derby modes; includes 700 MLB players.
- WWF Raw — Wrestling game with upgraded sound effects and more moves than Genesis version.
- WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game — Cross between wrestling and *Mortal Kombat*-style fighting; port of Midway’s 1995 *WWF Wrestlemania* coin-op.
- Zaxxon’s Motherbase 2000 — 32X-exclusive sequel to *Zaxxon*, the 1982 Sega/Gremlin arcade game.

APPENDIX IV.

TURBOGRAFX-CD

The Console

In Japan in early 1989, NEC released the CD-ROM2 attachment for the PC Engine (the Japanese TurboGrafx-16). This made the PC Engine the first video game system to use CDs. For the American market and the TurboGrafx-16, the CD-ROM2 was redesigned and renamed, resulting in the TurboGrafx-CD. Unfortunately, the TurboGrafx-CD debuted with a retail price of \$399. This prohibitively high price, combined with a lack of third-party support, resulted in a short life span for the CD-ROM add-on.

In 1992, NEC released a TurboGrafx-16-/TurboGrafx-CD combo called the TurboDuo, which was a cool system, but couldn't come close to competing with the Genesis and Super NES.

The Games

The Addams Family — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1991 film; control Tully, who wields an umbrella that shoots.

Beyond Shadowgate — Point-and-click third-person adventure; the sequel to *Shadowgate* for the NES.

Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure — Enhanced version of the TurboGrafx-16 side-scrolling platformer; features versus mode and better music.

Buster Bros. — Non-scrolling shooter with platforms; run around shooting bubbles to make them pop (they divide into smaller bubbles

that can be shot); based on 1989 Capcom arcade classic.

Camp California — Control bird creature through side-scrolling platform levels.

Cosmic Fantasy 2 — Third-party, turn-based RPG published by Working Designs.

Cotton: Fantastic Night Dreams — Side-scrolling shooter; control a witch riding a broomstick.

Dragon Slayer: The Legend of Heroes — Third-person RPG developed by Falcom.

Dungeon Explorer II — Sequel to *Dungeon Explorer* for the TurboGrafx-16; features better sound and more hidden areas than its progenitor.

Dungeon Master: Theron's Quest — First-person RPG; similar to the original *Dungeon Master* computer game, but with seven small dungeons to explore instead of one large one.

The Dynastic Hero — Remake of *Wonder Boy in Monster World*, but with insect characters, a new soundtrack, and anime-style cut scenes.

Exile — Third-party RPG published by Working Designs; hack-and-slash action.

Exile: Wicked Phenomenon — Third-party RPG published by Working Designs; the sequel to *Exile*; includes four playable characters.

Fighting Street — Similar to the 1987 arcade classic, *Street Fighter*.

Final Zone II — Top-down, run-and-gun, vertical scrolling shooter.

Forgotten Worlds — Side-scrolling shooter; based on 1988 Capcom arcade game; also released for the Genesis.

- Gate of Thunder/Bonk's Adventure/Bonk's Revenge — Pack-in multi-game disc with Turbo Duo system.
- Godzilla — One-on-one fighting game featuring Gigan, Mechagodzilla, and 14 other Toho monsters.
- It Came from the Desert — Action/adventure title paying homage to B-movie creature features.
- Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf — Golf against The Golden Bear in this third-party game published by Accolade.
- John Madden Duo CD Football — Entry in the popular *Madden* series complemented by full-motion video.
- Last Alert — Top-down, run-and-gun shooter similar to such games as *Ikari Warriors* and *Commando*.
- Loom — Unusual graphic adventure game developed by LucasArts; based on the 1990 computer game.
- Lords of the Rising Sun — Action/strategy game somewhat similar to *Defenders of the Crown*; based on the 1989 computer game.
- Lords of Thunder — One of the most highly regarded side-scrolling shooters of the era; players control a mech robot that flies, but can also run along the ground.
- Magical Dinosaur Tour — Educational title; players learn all kinds of facts about dinosaurs.
- Might and Magic III: Isles of Terra — First-person RPG, also released for the SNES.
- Monster Lair — Platform shooting through jungles, caves, deserts, and the like.
- Prince of Persia — Side-scrolling platformer based on popular 1989 computer game.
- Riot Zone — Similar to the side-scrolling combat classic *Streets of Rage*, but much easier and designed for only one player.
- Shadow of the Beast — Side-scrolling platform/adventure title based on 1989 computer game.
- Shape Shifter — Side-scrolling combat/adventure game in which players turn into animals and solve puzzles.
- Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective — FMV game featuring the famous Arthur Conan Doyle-created sleuth.
- Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective Vol. II — Examine clues to solve crimes as Sherlock Holmes in this FMV sequel.
- SimEarth: The Living Planet — World-building sim in which players control their own planet.
- Splash Lake — Top-down action puzzle in which players control an ostrich that hops around and pecks floor tiles.
- Super Air Zonk: Rockabilly Paradise — Side-scrolling shooter; the sequel to *Air Zonk*; players can transform into nine different forms.
- Syd Mead's Terraforming — Side-scrolling shooter similar to Genesis games *Gaiates* and *ThunderForce III*.
- Valis II — Side-scroller in which girl runs, jumps, and wields a sword that shoots projectiles.
- Valis III — Sequel to *Valis II* with three playable characters and more weapons; features more levels and cut scenes and better audio than the Genesis version.
- Vasteel — Action/strategy game in which players directly control characters doing battle.
- Ys Book I & II — Top-down action RPG featuring two epic games from Falcom.
- Ys III: Wanderers from Ys — Side-scrolling action RPG in which the character players control can now jump.

APPENDIX V.

ATARI LYNX

The System

The first programmable handheld game system featuring a full color display, the Atari Lynx was released in 1989. Despite its vast technological advantages, the Lynx couldn't compete with the mainstream success of the ubiquitous Nintendo Game Boy. Short battery life, poor distribution, and a relatively small library of games are often cited as reasons for its failure in the marketplace.

The Games

A.P.B.— Mission-based racer based on 1987 Atari arcade game.
Awesome Golf— Traditional golfing game.
Baseball Heroes— Baseball game featuring link compatibility.
BasketBrawl— Hoops title also available for the 7800.
Batman Returns— Side-scrolling combat game based on the 1992 Tim Burton film.
BattleWheels— Vehicle shooter for 1–6 players.
Battlezone 2000— An update of the 1980 Atari arcade classic, *Battlezone*.
Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure— Action/adventure based on the 1989 feature film.
Blockout— Action puzzle based on 1989 Technos arcade game.
Blue Lightning— Flight combat simulator developed by Epyx.
Bubble Trouble— Side-scrolling platformer from Telegames.

California Games— Half Pipe Skateboard, Footbag, Surfing, and BMX Bike Riding.
Championship Rally— Top-down racer for 1–4 players.
Checkered Flag— Formula-1/Indy Racing for 1–6 players.
Chip's Challenge— Top-down adventure puzzle.
Crystal Mines II— Maze game; sequel to *Crystal Mines* for the NES.
Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf— Overhead view free-roaming shooter.
Dinolympics— Adventure puzzle.
Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop— Side-scrolling combat.
Double Dragon— Side-scrolling combat, based on 1987 Taito arcade game.
Dracula the Undead— Adventure game.
Electrocop— Maze game.
European Soccer Challenge— More than 130 teams, representing 36 nations.
Fat Bobby— Side-scrolling platformer.
Fidelity Ultimate Chess Challenge— Simulated chess with 17 difficulty levels.
Gates of Zendocon— Side-scrolling shooter.
Gauntlet: The Third Encounter— Maze shooter/adventure, sequel to the 1985 Atari arcade game.
Gordo 106— Side-scrolling platformer.
Hard Drivin'— Sports car racing, based on the 1989 Atari arcade game.
Hockey— Standard hockey title; includes fighting mode.
Hydra— Vehicle shooter based on 1990 Atari arcade game.

- Hyperdome — Similar to *Ballblazer*.
- Ishido: The Way of Stones — Tile board game.
- Jimmy Connors Tennis — Endorsed by the eight-time Grand Slam winner.
- Joust — Based on the 1982 Williams arcade game, enhanced with gladiator mode.
- KLAX — Highly acclaimed port of 1989 Atari arcade action puzzle.
- Krazy Ace Miniature Golf — Four-player mini-golf from Telegames.
- Kung Food — Side-scrolling combat/platform with humor.
- Lemmings — Adventure puzzle based on 1991 computer classic.
- Lexis — Action puzzler similar to *Wordtris*.
- Lynx Casino — Gambling sim with Atari insider jokes.
- Malibu Bikini Volleyball — Two-on-two beach volleyball.
- Ms. Pac-Man — Maze game based on 1982 arcade classic.
- NFL Football — Overhead-view vertical football.
- Ninja Gaiden — Side-scrolling combat based on 1988 Tecmo arcade game.
- Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom — The follow-up to *Ninja Gaiden II* for NES.
- Pac-Land — Platformer in which Pac-Man has arms and legs.
- Paperboy — Based on Atari's 1984 arcade game.
- Pinball Jam — Includes Midway's *Elvira and the Party Monsters* and Williams' *Police Force*.
- Pit-Fighter — Port of 1990 Atari fighting game.
- Power Factor — Platform shooter set in virtual reality chamber.
- Qix — Port of Taito's 1981 arcade classic.
- Raiden — Vertical scrolling shooter based on 1990 Seibu Kaihatsu arcade game.
- Rampage — Port of 1986 Bally arcade game with extra character: Larry the Lab Rat.
- Rampart — Action puzzle, defend and attack castles.
- RoadBlasters — Demolition/combat racing based on 1987 Atari arcade game.
- Robo-Squash — Futuristic take on *Pong*-like action.
- Robotron: 2084 — Non-scrolling shooter based on 1982 Williams arcade classic.
- Rygar — Platformer with shield-throwing attack; based on 1987 Nintendo game.
- Scrapyard Dog — Platformer somewhat similar to *Super Mario Bros*.
- Shadow of the Beast — Platformer based on Amiga computer classic.
- Shanghai — Tile puzzler similar to Mahjongg.
- Steel Talons — Flight combat sim based on 1991 Atari arcade game.
- S.T.U.N. Runner — 2D version of 1989 Atari racing game.
- Super Asteroids & Missile Command — Super versions of two coin-op classics.
- Super Off Road — Over-head view racing based on 1989 Leland arcade game.
- Super Skweek — Action puzzle with cute theme.
- Switchblade II — Side-scrolling combat; based on computer game.
- Todd's Adventures in Slime World — Run-and-shoot platformer also released for Genesis.
- Toki — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1989 TAD Corporation arcade game.
- Tournament Cyberball — Futuristic sport based on 1989 Atari arcade game.
- Turbo Sub — Shooter taking place underwater and in the skies.
- Viking Child — Side-scrolling platformer with lots of weapons.
- Warbirds — Elaborate flight combat simulator.
- World Class Soccer — Handheld version of world's most popular sport.
- Xenophobe — Based on the 1987 Bally/Midway arcade game.
- Xybots — Based on the 1987 Atari arcade game.
- Zarlor Mercenary — Slow, but nice looking shooter.

APPENDIX VI.

NINTENDO GAME BOY

The System

The original Game Boy was released in 1989, spawning numerous handheld Nintendo systems, including the Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, Nintendo DS, and Nintendo 3DS. Despite its small greenish/grayish screen, the system trounced the Atari Lynx and the Sega Game Gear in the marketplace. This was due in part to its low price, widespread distribution, huge library, and inclusion of *Tetris* as the original pack-in title with the system.

The Games

The Addams Family — Side-scrolling platformer with Gomez as protagonist.

The Addams Family: Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt — Based on *The Addams Family* cartoon.

Adventure Island — Port of NES side-scrolling platformer.

Adventure Island II: Aliens in Paradise — Sequel to popular platformer.

The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends — Platformer based on classic cartoon.

The Adventures of Star Saver — Platform shooter.

Aerostar — Vertical scrolling shooter

Aladdin — Side-scrolling platformer based on Disney's 1992 feature film.

Alfred Chicken — Side-scrolling platformer also released for NES.

Alien Olympics 2044 AD — Mix of track-and-field and classic arcade-style games.

Alien 3 — Overhead-view shooter based on 1992 feature film.

Alien vs. Predator: The Last of His Clan — Guide Predator to defeat Aliens.

Alleyway — Ball-and-paddle game similar to *Breakout* and *Arkanoid*.

All-Star Baseball '99 — Handheld version of America's pastime.

Altered Space: A 3-D Alien Adventure — Action/adventure game.

Amazing Penguin — Maze game with 40 levels.

The Amazing Spider-Man — Battle six classic Spidey foes in this side-scroller.

Amazing Tater — Adventure puzzle similar to *Kwirk*.

Animaniacs — Side-scrolling platformer based on cartoon.

Arcade Classic No. 1: Asteroids/Missile Command — Includes two all-time classic arcade shooters.

Arcade Classic No. 2: Centipede/Millipede — Includes two all-time classic arcade shooters.

Arcade Classic No. 3: Galaga/Galaxian — Includes two all-time classic arcade shooters.

Arcade Classic No. 4: Defender/Joust — Includes classic arcade shooter and non-scrolling platformer.

Asteroids — Port of Atari's 1979 arcade classic.

Atomic Punk — Based on overhead-view 1991 Irem arcade game.

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1978 film.

Avenging Spirit — Platform shooter based on 1991 Jaleco arcade game.

Balloon Kid — Similar to the NES game, *Balloon Fight*.

- Barbie Game Girl — Side-scrolling platformer starring classic doll.
- Bart Simpson's Escape from Camp Deadly — Side-scroller based on prime time cartoon.
- Baseball — System launch title.
- Bases Loaded for Game Boy — The NES baseball series comes to the Game Boy.
- Batman Forever — Based on the 1995 feature film.
- Batman: Return of the Joker — Side-scroller also released on the NES.
- Batman: The Animated Series — Based on the acclaimed Caped Crusader cartoon.
- Batman: The Video Game — Based on Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989).
- Battle Arena Toshinden — Fighting game also released on the PlayStation.
- Battle Bull — Vehicle-based maze game with 48 levels.
- Battle Unit Zeoth — Platform shooter.
- Battletoads — Side-scrolling combat also released on NES.
- Battletoads/Double Dragon: The Ultimate Team — One-player take on hit game.
- Battletoads in Ragnarok's World — Side-scrolling combat developed by Rare.
- Battlezone/Super Breakout — Ports of two classic Atari arcade games.
- Beavis and Butt-head — Based on the MTV animated series.
- Beetlejuice — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1988 movie.
- Best of the Best Championship Karate — Fighting game loosely based on the 1989 film, *Best of the Best*.
- Bill & Ted's Excellent Game Boy Adventure — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1989 film.
- Bill Elliot's NASCAR Fast Tracks — Racer viewed from inside the car.
- Bionic Battler — First-person action game.
- Bionic Commando — Based on 1987 Capcom arcade game.
- Black Bass Lure Fishing — Features eight different types of lures.
- Blades of Steel — Based on 1987 Konami arcade game.
- Blaster Master Boy — Sequel to popular NES game, *Blaster Master*.
- The Blues Brothers — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1980 film.
- Bo Jackson: Two Games in One — Football and baseball starring the two-sport superstar.
- Boggle Plus — Based on the popular word game.
- Bomberman GB — Handheld version of popular overhead-view action game.
- Bonk's Adventure — Port of renowned TurboGrafx-16 platformer.
- Bonk's Revenge — Sequel to *Bonk's Adventure*.
- Boomer's Adventure in Asmik World — Thirty-three levels of maze action.
- Boulder Dash — Maze puzzle also released for the NES and other systems.
- Boxxle — Shove boxes to solve puzzles.
- Boxxle II — Similar to *Boxyboy* (TurboGrafx-16) and *Shove It! ... The Warehouse Game* (Genesis).
- Brain Bender — Aim mirrors to reflect lasers in 120 levels of puzzle action.
- Brain Drain — 250 levels of puzzle action.
- Bram Stoker's Dracula — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1992 film.
- BreakThru! — Puzzler designed by Alexey Pajitnov (of *Tetris* fame).
- Bubble Bobble — Based on 1986 arcade classic.
- Bubble Bobble Part 2 — *Bubble Bobble* sequel; also released on NES.
- Bubble Ghost — 35-stage adventure puzzle.
- Bubsy II — Sequel to *Bubsy*; also released on Genesis and SNES.
- The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle — Guide the Looney Tunes star through side-scrolling platform action.
- The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 2 — Game Boy exclusive sequel.
- BurgerTime Deluxe — 28-screen sequel to the 1982 arcade classic, *BurgerTime*.
- Bust-A-Move 2: Arcade Edition — Action puzzler based on 1996 Taito coin-op game.
- Buster Bros. — Non-scrolling platformer based on 1989 Capcom arcade game.
- Caesar's Palace — Features blackjack, video poker, slots, and roulette.
- Captain America and the Avengers — Marvel Comics game based on 1991 Data East arcade classic.
- Casino Fun Pack — Features blackjack, video poker, slots, craps, and roulette.
- Casper — The "friendliest ghost I know" comes to the Lynx via this action/adventure title.
- Castelian — Vertical scrolling platformer based on *Nebulus*, the late '80s computer game.
- The Castlevania Adventure — The first *Castlevania* title for the Game Boy.
- Castlevania Legends — Super Game Boy enhanced take on the *Castlevania* series.
- Castlevania II: Belmont's Revenge — The sequel to *The Castlevania Adventure*.

- Catrap — Adventure puzzler with more than 100 screens.
- Centipede (Accolade Release) — Port of 1980 Atari arcade game, enhanced with two-player simultaneous action.
- Centipede (Majesco Release) — Re-release of Accolade version, but with Super Game Boy enhancements.
- Championship Pool — Billiards title also released for the NES, SNES, and Genesis.
- Chase H.Q. — Demolition/combat racer based on the 1988 Taito arcade game.
- The Chessmaster — Portable take on the popular series, which began on computers in 1986 with *The Chessmaster 2000*.
- Choplifter II — Exclusive Game Boy sequel to Sega's 1985 *Choplifter* arcade game.
- Chuck Rock — Game Boy take on 1992 Genesis and SNES side-scrolling platformer.
- Cliffhanger — Side-scrolling platformer based on Sylvester Stallone action/adventure film.
- College Slam — Basketball title similar to *NBA Jam*.
- Contra: The Alien Wars — Super Game Boy enhanced take on SNES game.
- Cool Spot — Side-scrolling platformer starring 7UP mascot.
- Cool World — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1992 animated/live action movie.
- CosmoTank — Top-down tank shooter.
- Crystal Quest — Space shooter based on 1987 computer game.
- Cutthroat Island — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1995 action/adventure movie.
- Cyraid — Non-scrolling platformer.
- Daedalian Opus — Action puzzler with shapes and blocks.
- Daffy Duck — Platform shooter starring Daffy's alter-ego, Duck Dodgers.
- Darkman — Side-scrolling combat game based on 1990 film.
- Darkwing Duck — Side-scrolling platformer in which the Disney duck battles Moliarity, Quackerjack, and Mega Volt.
- David Crane's The Rescue of Princess Blobette — Adventure puzzle starring A Boy and His Blob.
- Days of Thunder — Racing game based on 1990 feature film.
- Dead Heat Scramble — Top-down racer.
- Dennis the Menace — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1993 movie.
- Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf — Super Game Boy enhanced take on Genesis game.
- Dexterity — Action puzzler produced by SNK.
- Dick Tracy — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1990 film.
- Dig Dug — Includes port of 1982 arcade classic, plus an exclusive game called *New Dig Dug*.
- Dr. Franken — Cartoonish, monster-based, side-scrolling platformer.
- Dr. Franken II — The third game in the series (after *The Adventures of Dr. Franken* for the SNES).
- Dr. Mario — Action puzzler inspired by *Tetris*.
- Donkey Kong — Super Game Boy enhanced update of Nintendo's 1981 arcade classic, *Donkey Kong*, with tons of new levels and puzzles.
- Donkey Kong Land — An offshoot of the SNES *Donkey Kong Country* series.
- Donkey Kong Land 2 — Super Game Boy enhanced sequel to *Donkey Kong Land*.
- Donkey Kong Land III — Super Game Boy enhanced sequel to *Donkey Kong Land 2*.
- Double Dragon — Based on Taito's seminal side-scrolling combat game from 1987.
- Double Dragon II — Like *Double Dragon*, *Double Dragon II* supports the Game Link Cable for two-player simultaneous action.
- Double Dragon 3: The Arcade Game — Based on the 1990 Technos coin-op, *Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stone*.
- Double Dribble 5 on 5 — Based on the popular NES basketball game, *Double Dribble*.
- DragonHeart: Fire & Steel — Side-scrolling combat based on *DragonHeart*, the 1996 feature film.
- Dragon's Lair: The Legend — 2D platformer inspired by *Dragon's Lair*, the 1983 laser disc arcade game.
- DuckTales — Side-scrolling platformer starring Scrooge, Disney's greedy duck.
- DuckTales 2 — Scrooge uses a cane to attack, pogo-jump, and destroy objects in this side-scrolling platformer.
- Earthworm Jim — Funny platform shooter released for numerous systems.
- Elevator Action — Terrific port of Taito's 1983 platform shooter/climbing arcade classic.
- Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land — Maze game similar to *Boulderdash*.
- Extra Bases — Baseball title published by Bandai.
- F1 Pole Position — Racer also released for the SNES.
- F1 Race — *Pole Position*-like racer originally packaged with four-player adapter.
- F-15 Strike Eagle — Flight combat simulator based on 1985 computer game.

- Faceball 2000 — Four-player first-person shooter also released for the SNES.
- Fastest Lap — Top-down racer; supports link cable for two-player action.
- Felix the Cat — Side-scrolling platformer starring cartoon cat has fewer levels than NES version.
- Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge — Formula-1/indy racer also released for the NES and Genesis.
- The Fidgetts — Obscure side-scrolling platformer with puzzle elements.
- FIFA International Soccer — Popular, multi-platform soccer title.
- FIFA: Road to World Cup 98 — Super Game Boy enhanced entry in the super soccer series.
- FIFA Soccer 96 — Isometric-view soccer.
- FIFA Soccer 97 — Stripped down version of console game.
- Fighting Simulator: 2 in 1 Flying Warriors — 2D fighter published by Culture Brain.
- Final Fantasy Adventure — Explore deserts, lakes, forests, snowfields, and caves in this popular RPG.
- Final Fantasy Legend — The first *Final Fantasy* game for the Game Boy.
- Final Fantasy Legend II — Battle hundreds of monsters and bad guys through nine worlds.
- Final Fantasy Legend III — Travel through the past, present, and future in this final Game Boy entry in the *Final Fantasy Legend* series.
- Fish Dude — Eat smaller fish while avoiding larger fish through 18 levels of play.
- Fist of the North Star: 10 Big Brawls for the King of the Universe — Ten characters battle in one-on-one fights; supports the Game Link Cable for two-player action.
- The Flash — Starring DC's Fastest Man Alive, this game is based on the 1990 TV series.
- The Flintstones — Side-scrolling platformer based on the 1994 feature film.
- The Flintstones: King Rock Treasure Island — Side-scrolling platformer based on the Hanna-Barbera cartoon series.
- Flipull — Maneuver and throw blocks to solve puzzles.
- Foreman Fore Real — George Foreman boxing title also released for Game Gear, Genesis and SNES.
- Fortified Zone — Overhead-view, free-roaming shooter with stealth elements and two playable characters.
- Fortress of Fear: Wizards & Warriors X — Game Boy entry in the popular *Wizards & Warriors* NES series.
- 4-in-1 Fun Pak — Includes chess, checkers, backgammon, and reversi.
- 4-in-1 Fun Pak: Volume II — Includes solitaire, dominoes, cribbage, and yacht.
- Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball — Multi-platform title starring the Chicago White Sox legend.
- Frogger — Super Game Boy enhanced take on Sega's 1981 arcade classic.
- Game & Watch Gallery — Based on Nintendo's LCD handheld games; includes *Manhole*, *Fire*, *Octopus*, and *Oil Panic*.
- The Game of Harmony — Control a spinning ball through 50 levels in this action puzzler.
- Gargoyle's Quest — *Ghosts 'N Goblins* offshoot in which players control Red Devil.
- Gauntlet II — Battle ghosts, grunts, demons, and sorcerers through more than 100 levels; based on the 1986 Atari arcade game.
- Gear Works — Place gears on a grid filled with pegs or spindles in this action puzzler.
- George Foreman's KO Boxing — Battle nine boxers as the former Heavyweight Champion.
- The Getaway: High Speed 2 — Handheld take on the 1992 Williams pinball machine.
- Ghostbusters II — Overhead-view action title based on 1989 feature film.
- Go! Go! Tank — Side-scrolling shooter in which players remove ground-based obstacles with winch-equipped plane.
- Goal! — Soccer title also released for the NES and SNES.
- Godzilla — As the Toho monster, players climb, push boulders, solve puzzles, and punch enemies through 64 screens.
- Golf — Control Mario as he plays golf on 18 holes.
- Gradius: The Interstellar Assault — Handheld iteration of the popular side-scrolling shooter series.
- Great Greed — Third-person action role-playing game published by Namco.
- Gremlins 2: The New Batch — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1990 feature film.
- HAL Wrestling — Wrestling title published by HAL America.
- Hammerin' Harry — Side-scrolling platformer based on the 1990 arcade game.
- Harvest Moon GB — Handheld version of *Harvest Moon* for the SNES.
- Hatris — *Tetris*-inspired puzzler using hats; also released for the NES.
- Heavyweight Championship Boxing — Select from six boxers to battle for the title.

- Heiankyo Alien — Maze puzzler where players dig holes and fill them in to defeat enemies.
- Hercules — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scroller based on Disney's 1997 feature film.
- High Stakes Gambling — Includes blackjack, slots, video poker, and craps.
- Hit the Ice — Hockey title based on 1990 Williams arcade game.
- Home Alone — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1990 feature film.
- Home Alone 2: Lost in New York — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1992 feature film.
- Hook — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1991 Disney film.
- Hudson Hawk — Play as cat burglar Eddie Hawkins in this side-scroller based on the 1991 movie.
- The Humans — *Lemmings*-style adventure puzzle also released for the Genesis and updated for the DS.
- The Hunchback of Notre Dame — Disney-based title featuring five mini-games: Chiseler, Djali Bowling, Catch the Fool, Upsy Daisy, and Picture Puzzle.
- The Hunt for Red October — Side-scrolling shooter based on 1990 feature film.
- Hyper Lode Runner — Handheld take on *Lode Runner*, the classic computer platformer; includes Edit mode.
- In Your Face — Basketball title featuring one-on-one and two-on-two action.
- The Incredible Crash Dummies — Side-scrolling platformer based on the Tyco toy line.
- Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade — Side-scrolling platformer based on the 1989 movie.
- InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Berlitz French Translator — Language translator featuring 12,500 words.
- InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Berlitz Spanish Translator — Features 300 phrases and more than 12,000 words.
- InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Frommer's Travel Guide — Travel advice for 15 different U.S. cities.
- InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Personal Organizer and Phone Book — Includes clock, calendar, addresses, phone numbers, and more.
- InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Spell Checker and Calculator — Features 60,000 words.
- International Superstar Soccer — Endorsed by Colombian soccer star Carlos Valderrama.
- Iron Man/X-O Manowar in Heavy Metal — Side-scrolling combat featuring Marvel and Valiant comic book characters.
- Ishido: The Way of Stones — Classic tile puzzle game.
- Itchy & Scratchy in Miniature Golf Madness — Mini-golf starring Bart Simpson's favorite cartoon characters.
- Jack Nicklaus Golf — Golf sim endorsed by The Golden Bear.
- James Bond 007 — Overhead-view action that is shaken, not stirred.
- Jeep Jamboree — Race against 13 other drivers on 22 different tracks.
- Jeopardy! — Handheld take on popular game show; features more than 1,500 questions/answers.
- Jeopardy! Platinum Edition — 1,500 more questions/answers.
- Jeopardy! Sports Edition — Similar to the popular game show, but with all sports questions.
- Jeopardy! Teen Edition — More than 1,500 questions/answers aimed at teenagers.
- The Jetsons: Robot Panic — Side-scrolling platformer based on *The Jetsons* TV show.
- Joe & Mac — Side-scrolling platformer also released for Genesis, NES, and SNES.
- Jordan vs Bird: One on One — Michael Jordan and Larry Bird hoop it up in this sequel to the 1983 computer game, *One-on-One*.
- Judge Dredd — Platform shooter based on the 1995 feature film.
- The Jungle Book — Side-scrolling platformer based on Disney's 1967 feature film.
- Jungle Strike — Overhead-view free-roaming shooter; the sequel to *Desert Strike*.
- Jurassic Park — Overhead-view free-roaming shooter based on 1993 film; port of NES version.
- Jurassic Park Part 2: The Chaos Continues — Platform shooter; sequel to *Jurassic Park*.
- Ken Griffey Jr. Presents Major League Baseball — Stars one of the best baseball players of the 1990s; also released for the SNES.
- Kid Dracula — Cartoonish take on the *Castlevania* formula, but with players controlling a vampire.
- Kid Icarus: Of Myths and Monsters — The sequel to the NES game, *Kid Icarus*.
- Killer Instinct: Fighting game based on 1994 Midway coin-op; developed by Rare.
- King James Bible — Unlicensed rarity; features three games, plus complete Bible.
- The King of Fighters '95 — Super Game Boy enhanced fighting game.
- Kingdom Crusade — Action/strategy fantasy game similar to Archon.

- Kirby's Block Ball — Ball-and-paddle game starring Nintendo's pink, puffy Kirby.
- Kirby's Dream Land — Side-scrolling platformer in which Kirby swallows enemies.
- Kirby's Dream Land 2 — Super Game Boy enhanced sequel with new enemies, friends, and powers.
- Kirby's Pinball Land — Adventure pinball with three stages: Poppy Brothers, Wispy Woods, and Kracko.
- Kirby's Star Stacker — Super Game Boy enhanced action puzzle.
- KLAX — *Tetris*-inspired action puzzle based on 1989 Atari arcade game.
- Knight Quest — Action RPG with top-down and side-view perspectives.
- Krusty's Fun House — *Simpsons*-based adventure puzzle also released for the NES.
- Kung-Fu Master — Punch and kick your way through six stages of obstacles and armed enemies; inspired by the 1984 Irem arcade game.
- Kwirk — Roll pebbles, shove blocks, and turn turnstiles in this adventure puzzle.
- Lamborghini: American Challenge — Sports car racing where players earn money to buy power-ups.
- Last Action Hero — Side-scrolling combat based on 1993 Arnold Schwarzenegger movie.
- Lazlo's Leap — 100-stage marble puzzler similar to checkers.
- Legend of the River King — Super Game Boy enhanced fishing RPG also released for the GBC.
- The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening — Link's handheld debut on the Game Boy.
- Lemmings — Adventure puzzle based on classic computer game; includes more than 150 stages.
- Lethal Weapon — Platform shooter based on 1987 Mel Gibson/Danny Glover movie.
- The Lion King — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling platformer based on 1994 Disney movie.
- The Little Mermaid — Action/adventure title based on Disney's 1989 feature film.
- Lock N' Chase — *Pac-Man*-inspired maze title based on 1981 arcade game.
- Looney Tunes — Control Bugs Bunny and other Looney cartoon characters in this side-scrolling platformer.
- Loopz — Maneuver various shapes on a grid to create connections in this action puzzler.
- The Lost World: Jurassic Park — Super Game Boy enhanced take on 1997 feature film.
- Madden 95 — Super Game Boy enhanced entry in the popular John Madden football series.
- Madden 96 — Super Game Boy enhanced entry in the popular John Madden football series.
- Madden 97 — Super Game Boy enhanced entry in the popular John Madden football series.
- Malibu Beach Volleyball — Two-on-two beach volleyball with Link Cable support.
- Marble Madness — Move a marble through a faux 3D maze; based on Atari's 1984 arcade classic.
- Mario's Picross — Super Game Boy enhanced puzzler involving chiseling blocks on a grid to reveal pictures.
- Maru's Mission — Platform shooter with Frankenstein, Medusa, Dracula, and the Wolfman as enemies.
- Maui Mallard in Cold Shadow — Side-scrolling platformer starring Donald Duck-like detective.
- Mega Man II — Platform shooter featuring levels from *Mega Man 2* and *Mega Man 3* for the NES.
- Mega Man III — Similar to *Mega Man 3* and *Mega Man 4* for the NES.
- Mega Man IV — Another entry in the critically acclaimed series; based on the NES *Mega Man* titles.
- Mega Man V — Super Game Boy enhanced take on the popular NES series.
- Mega Man: Dr. Wiley's Revenge — The first *Mega Man* title for the Game Boy.
- Megalit — Puzzle game in which players move blocks.
- Mercenary Force — Turn-based strategy set in Japan.
- Metal Masters — One-on-one fighting game with giant robots as fighters.
- Metroid II: Return of Samus — The Game Boy sequel to *Metroid* (NES).
- Mickey Mouse: Magic Wands! — Side-scrolling platformer in which Mickey must rescue his friends.
- Mickey's Dangerous Chase — Side-scrolling platformer in which players control Mickey or Minnie.
- Mickey's Ultimate Challenge — Adventure puzzle featuring five challenges.
- Micro Machines — Top-down racer in which players control Galoob Toys' popular vehicles.
- Mighty Morphin Power Rangers — Side-scrolling combat based on kids' television series.
- Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie — Side-scrolling combat based on the 1995 film.
- Milon's Secret Castle — *Super Mario Bros.*-inspired platformer also released for the NES.

- Miner 2049er — Platformer based on classic computer/Atari 5200/ColecoVision game.
- Missile Command — Non-scrolling shooter based on 1980 arcade classic.
- Mr. Chin's Gourmet Paradise — Platformer in which players zap enemies with "demoe beam."
- Mr. Do! — Maze game based on Universal's 1982 arcade classic; similar to *Dig Dug*.
- Mole Mania — Super Game Boy enhanced adventure puzzle with 175 stages.
- Monopoly — Four-player handheld version of the classic board game.
- Mortal Kombat — Stripped down rendition of the 1992 Midway arcade game; supports Link Cable for two-player action.
- Mortal Kombat I and II — *Mortal Kombat* and *Mortal Kombat II* in one cartridge.
- Mortal Kombat II — Based on the 1993 Midway arcade game; supports Link Cable for two-player action.
- Mortal Kombat 3 — Based on the 1995 Midway arcade game; includes eight selectable fighters.
- Motocross Maniacs — Side-view, nitro-boosted racing through tracks littered with ramps, sand, and loops.
- Mouse Trap Hotel — Side-scrolling platformer in which mouse uses his tail to attack.
- Ms. Pac-Man — Port of Midway's arcade classic with two-player simultaneous action via Link Cable.
- Muhammad Ali Heavyweight Boxing — Fly like a butterfly and sting like a bee with Muhammad Ali.
- Mulan — Super Game Boy enhanced, side-scrolling platformer based on the 1998 Disney film.
- Mysterium — First-person maze RPG in which players transform items and battle monsters.
- Mystical Ninja starring Goeman — Super Game Boy enhanced action/adventure/RPG from Konami.
- Nail 'n Scale — Use nails and destroy blocks to solve puzzles.
- Navy Seals — Platform shooter based on the 1990 Charlie Sheen feature film.
- NBA All-Star Challenge — Includes One-on-One, Free Throw Competition, H.O.R.S.E., Accuracy Shootout, and All-Star Tournament.
- NBA All-Star Challenge 2 — Adds Slam Dunk Contest and Three-Point Shootout to original formula.
- NBA Jam — Handheld take on the two-on-two Midway arcade classic (1993).
- NBA Jam T.E. — Handheld version of Midway's *NBA Jam Tournament Edition* (arcade, 1993).
- NBA Live 96 — Super Game Boy enhanced take on the popular *NBA Live* series.
- Nemesis — Port of Konami's 1985 arcade side-scrolling shooter; similar to *Gradius*.
- The New Chessmaster — The sequel to *The Chessmaster*.
- NFL Football — Workman-like gridiron title from the folks at Konami.
- NFL Quarterback Club — Four events with Aikman, Kelly, Elway, Moon, and other pros.
- NFL Quarterback Club II — Essentially *NFL Quarterback Club '95* for the Game Boy.
- NFL Quarterback Club 96 — Scaled down version of console game with seven players per team and no QB Challenge.
- NHL Hockey 95 — Super Game Boy enhanced take on *NHL 95*.
- NHL 96 — Super Game Boy enhanced version of popular console hockey title.
- Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing — Formula-1/indy racer licensed by the famous British driver.
- Ninja Boy — Overhead-view action through eight worlds of caves, deserts, castles, and the like.
- Ninja Boy 2 — Largely linear RPG with random, action-oriented battles.
- Ninja Gaiden Shadow — Side-scrolling hack-and-slash; prequel to the popular *Ninja Gaiden* for the NES.
- Ninja Taro — Action-oriented RPG that puts players in the role of a Ninja Master.
- Nintendo World Cup — Two-player handheld version of the four-player NES soccer game.
- NIV Bible & The 20 Lost Levels of Joshua — Includes the complete text of the *New International Version Bible*, plus Bible Word Match and the hangman-like Bible Shepherd.
- Nobunaga's Ambition — Turn-based strategy set in 16th century Japan.
- Oddworld Adventures — Super Game Boy enhanced entry in the *Oddworld* adventure puzzle series.
- Olympic Summer Games — Includes: 100 meter sprint, 110 meter hurdles, pole vault, long jump, triple jump, javelin, high jump, discus, skeet shooting, and archery.
- Operation C — The first handheld entry in the popular *Contra* series.
- Out of Gas — Top-down, mission-based racing.
- Pac-Attack — A cross between *Pac-Man* and *Tetris*.

- Pac-in-Time — Side-scrolling platformer starring Pac-Man with legs; Super Game Boy enhanced.
- Pac-Man — Port of Namco's 1980 arcade classic; screen scrolls to fit maze on small screen.
- The Pagemaster — Side-scrolling platformer based on the 1994 feature film.
- Panel Action Bingo — Players guide a bird while avoiding cat on bingo card.
- Paperboy — Portable port of Atari's 1984 coin-op classic.
- Paperboy 2 — Handheld sequel to *Paperboy*; includes a papergirl.
- Penguin Wars — Dodgeball in which players control a penguin, bat, cow, rabbit, or rat.
- PGA European Tour — Super Game Boy enhanced golf; also released for SNES, Genesis, and N64.
- PGA Tour 96 — Five courses, five tournaments, three play modes: Practice, Skins, Tournament.
- Pinball Dreams — Traditional pinball featuring three tables: Ignition, Steel Wheel, and Graveyard.
- Pinball Fantasies — Traditional pinball featuring four tables: Partyland, Speed Devils, Billion Dollar Gameshow, and Stones 'n' Bones.
- Pinocchio — Seven levels of side-scrolling platformer action based on the 1940 animated film.
- Pipe Dream — Action puzzle in which players strategically place pieces of pipe so ooze can flow.
- Pit-Fighter — Handheld version of Atari's 1990 arcade fighting game.
- Play Action Football — Two-player top-down football that supports the Game Link Cable.
- Pocahontas — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling platformer based on 1995 Disney film.
- Pokémon: Blue Version — Super Game Boy-enhanced RPG; collect, train, and battle creatures (some exclusive to the blue cartridge).
- Pokémon: Red Version — Super Game Boy enhanced RPG; collect, train, and battle creatures (some exclusive to the red cartridge).
- Pokémon: Yellow Version — Special Pikachu Edition — Super Game Boy enhanced RPG; collect, train, and battle creatures (emphasis on Pikachu).
- Popeye 2 — *Super Mario Bros.*-style platformer starring the punching cartoon sailor.
- Power Mission — Turn-based naval battle board game.
- Power Racer — Top-down maze racer similar to *Head On* (arcade) and *Dodge 'Em* (Atari 2600).
- Prehistorik Man — Ten levels of side-scrolling platform action in dinosaur-infested jungle.
- Primal Rage — Super Game Boy enhanced version of 1994 Atari monster fighting game.
- Prince of Persia — Portable take on Jordan Mechner's 1989 side-scrolling platform computer game.
- The Punisher: The Ultimate Payback — First-person shooter starring Marvel Comics vigilante Frank Castle.
- Pyramids of Ra — Top-down puzzler; jump on and then off tiles to destroy them.
- Q Billion — Adventure puzzle with 120 puzzles; use mouse to push tiles.
- Q*bert for Game Boy — Port of 1982 arcade classic with new characters and different cube configurations.
- Qix — Nice port of 1981 arcade game; draw lines to fill in space; link up for alternating gameplay.
- Quarth — Cross between *Tetris* and vertical shooter; based on the 1989 Konami arcade obscurity.
- R-Type — Nice port of Nintendo's popular side-scrolling arcade shooter.
- Race Days — Includes windshield-view 4 Wheel Drive and top-down Dirty Racin'.
- Radar Mission — *Battleship*-type board game supplemented by side-scrolling shooter mode.
- Raging Fighter — Konami fighting game with seven playable characters; supports Link Cable.
- Rampart — Portable port of 1990 Atari arcade action/strategy game.
- The Real Ghostbusters — Side-scrolling platformer based on the 1986–1991 animated series.
- The Ren & Stimpy Show: Space Cadet Adventures — Platform shooter based on Nickelodeon cartoon.
- The Ren & Stimpy Show: Veediods! — Control both Ren and Stimpy in side-scrolling platformer.
- Revenge of the 'Gator — The first pinball game for Nintendo's venerable handheld system.
- Riddick Bowe Boxing — Pugilist title starring the former World Heavyweight champion.
- Ring Rage — Wrestling title with kick boxer, karate expert, and three wrestlers as playable characters; port of 1992 Taito arcade game.
- Road Rash — Race motorcycle and attack other racers in this port of the popular Genesis game.
- Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves — Top-down RPG based on NES game and 1991 Kevin Costner film.

- RoboCop — Ten-level platform shooter based on 1987 Paul Verhoeven-directed film.
- RoboCop 2 — Fifteen-level platform shooter based on 1990 Irvin Kershner-directed film.
- RoboCop vs. The Terminator — Platform shooter based on the Dark Horse comic book series.
- Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball — Twenty-six-team game starring pitcher Roger "Rocket" Clemens.
- Rolan's Curse — Third-person action RPG featuring Link Cable support for two-player action.
- Rolan's Curse 2 — Control up to four characters in this sequel to *Rolan's Curse*.
- The Rugrats Movie — Super Game Boy enhanced take on the 1998 animated film.
- Samurai Shodown — Super Game Boy enhanced port of the 1993 SNK arcade/Neo Geo game.
- seaQuest DSV — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling shooter based on TV series.
- Serpent — Action title similar to *Surround* (Atari 2600) and *Snafu* (Intellivision).
- Shanghai — Tile puzzle based on the ancient Chinese game, Mahjong.
- Shaq-Fu — Super Game Boy enhanced fighting title starring hoops star Shaquille O'Neal.
- Side Pocket — Top-down pool title featuring 9-Ball and Pocket Play.
- The Simpsons: Bart & the Beanstalk — Seven-stage side-scrolling platformer with fairy tale theme and Bart Simpson.
- The Simpsons: Bart vs. The Juggernauts — Sports-type mini-games pitting Bart against other characters from the *Simpsons* television series.
- Skate or Die: Bad 'N Rad — Seven-level, obstacle-jumping, skateboarding sequel to *Skate or Die* (NES).
- Skate or Die: Tour De Thrash — Eight-level skateboarding with ramps, half-pipes, spiders to flatten, and competitors to bump aside.
- Small Soldiers — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling platformer based on the 1998 film.
- The Smurfs — Side-scrolling platformer starring Hefty, Papa Smurf, and other blue characters from the 1980s cartoon series.
- Sneaky Snakes — Sixteen-stage side-scrolling platformer; Link Cable support for two-player simultaneous action.
- Snoopy's Magic Show — Top-down adventure puzzle starring Snoopy and Woodstock.
- Snow Brothers — Non-scrolling platform title based on the 1990 Toaplan arcade game.
- Soccer Mania — U.S.A. Soccer Team battles five teams, plus the mystery All-Star Team.
- SolarStriker — Vertical scrolling shooter; fire lasers and missiles through six levels.
- Solitaire FunPak — Includes klondike, tripeaks, pyramid, cruel, freecell, golf, canfield, aces up, scorpion, poker, stonewall, and florentine.
- Solomon's Club — Handheld take on *Solomon's Key* for the NES.
- Space Invaders — Super Game Boy enhanced version of the 1978 arcade classic; includes two-player simultaneous action via Link Cable.
- Spanky's Quest — Vertical scrolling platformer; throw ball, collect keys, ascend towers; similar to *Bubble Bobble*.
- Speedball 2 — Violent, futuristic sport somewhat similar to hockey.
- Speedy Gonzalez — Side-scrolling platformer starring the Mexican cartoon mouse.
- Spider-Man 2 — Side-scrolling platform/combat game; the sequel to *The Amazing Spider-Man*.
- Spider-Man 3: Invasion of the Spider-Slayers — Side-scroller in which Spidey battles robots.
- Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge — Control Spider-Man, Cyclops, Gambit, Storm, and Wolverine in side-scrolling action.
- Spiritual Warfare — Unlicensed game that is similar to *The Legend of Zelda*.
- Sports Illustrated Championship Football & Baseball — Endorsed by the popular magazine, this two-sport cart features two-player simultaneous action via Link Cable.
- Sports Illustrated for Kids: The Ultimate Triple Dare — Includes snowboarding, skateboarding, bicycling, and five playable characters (two females, three males).
- Sports Illustrated Golf Classic — Includes two 18-hole courses and four different golfers.
- Spot: The Cool Adventure — Side-scrolling platformer starring the 7UP mascot.
- Spot: The Video Game! — Based on *Infection*, the European computer board/grid game.
- Spud's Adventure — Top-down action/adventure title featuring vegetables and a tower.
- Spy vs. Spy — Set traps, collect items, and avoid hazards as the *Mad* magazine spies.
- Square Deal — Action puzzle game with falling cards; based on poker.
- Star Trek: Generations — Beyond the Nexus — Multi-genre action/strategy based on *Star Trek: Generations* feature film; Super Game Boy enhanced.
- Star Trek: The Next Generation — Space combat simulator based on SF television series.
- Star Trek: 25th Anniversary — Pilot Enterprise;

- recover 12 pieces of weapon; destroy Doomsday Machine; based on *Star Trek TOS* (the original series).
- Star Wars—Multi-genre action based on classic 1977 feature film.
- Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back—Guide Luke in multi-genre action game based on 1980 film.
- StarGate—Top-down matching-tile action puzzler inspired by 1994 feature film.
- Stop that Roach!—Top-down, turn-based strategy title in which player eliminates roaches.
- Street Fighter II—Super Game Boy enhanced, Link Cable-supported version of influential fighting game.
- Street Racer—Go-kart racer obviously inspired by *Super Mario Kart*.
- Sumo Fighter—One-on-one fighting game with sumo wrestlers.
- Super Battletank—First-person tank shooter also released for the Game Gear.
- Super Hunchback—Run, jump, swing on ropes, and rescue Esmeralda as Quasimodo.
- Super Mario Land—*Super Mario Bros.*-style game in which Mario throws super balls.
- Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins—Features *Super Mario World*-style graphics and tons of levels.
- Super Off Road—Based on *Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road* arcade game.
- Super R.C. Pro-Am—Isometric-view radio-controlled car racing game.
- Super Scrabble Crossword Game—Link Cable-supported handheld version of board game.
- Super Star Wars: Return of the Jedi—Super Game Boy enhanced version of SNES game.
- Superman—Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling combat based on *Superman: The Animated Series*.
- Swamp Thing—side-scrolling platformer based on DC comic book and television series.
- The Sword of Hope—First-person RPG with six menu commands: look, open, hit, use, magic, and power.
- Sword of Hope II—First-person RPG in which players control a party of up to three characters.
- T2: The Arcade Game—First-person shooter based on the 1991 Bally/Midway arcade game.
- Tail 'Gator—Seven-level side-scrolling platformer; alligator uses tail for whipping enemies.
- TaleSpin—Side-scrolling shooter based on the Disney cartoon series.
- Tamagotchi—Super Game Boy enhanced take on the popular life development sim.
- Tarzan: Lord of the Jungle—Side-scrolling platformer starring the famous Edgar Rice Burroughs creation.
- Tasmania Story—Non-scrolling game; bounce up to platforms to walk across and collect plants.
- Taz-Mania—Run, spin, and jump as Tasmanian Devil through five side-scrolling island levels.
- Taz-Mania 2—More side-scrolling platform action with the crazed Looney Tunes character.
- Tecmo Bowl—Handheld version of popular NES football game; includes 21 NFL stars.
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan—Battle Bebop, Rocksteady, Baxter Stockman, Krang, and Shredder using the popular comic book/cartoon characters; side-scrolling combat.
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: Back from the Sewers—The sequel to *Fall of the Foot Clan*.
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: Radical Rescue—Control Michelangelo, Raphael, Donatello, and Leonardo in side-scrolling combat to rescue April O'Neil.
- Tennis—Mario calls the action in this Game Boy launch title; Game Link Cable compatible.
- Terminator 2: Judgment Day—Six levels of platforming, shooting, and puzzle-solving; based on the 1991 feature film.
- Tesseract—Move square pieces strategically to solve puzzles and clear the game board.
- Tetris—Seminal falling block puzzler; the original pack-in cartridge with the Game Boy.
- Tetris Attack—Super Game Boy enhanced tile-matching action puzzler; an offshoot of the original *Tetris*.
- Tetris Blast—Similar to the original *Tetris*, but with bombs.
- Tetris Plus—Super Game Boy enhanced *Tetris* with Puzzle mode, Edit mode, and original game.
- Tetris 2—Fixed blocks, flash blocks, and color-coded blocks change up the *Tetris* formula in this sequel.
- Tiny Toon Adventures: Babs' Big Break—Konami side-scrolling platformer based on cartoon.
- Tiny Toon Adventures 2: Montana's Movie Madness—Buster Bunny stars in side-scrolling platformer.
- Tiny Toon Adventures: Wacky Sports—Play baseball, football, tennis, soccer, basketball, and mini-golf as Buster Bunny or Babs.
- Titus the Fox—Two-player simultaneous (via Game Link Cable) side-scrolling platformer.

- Tom and Jerry — Guide Jerry through 10 side-scrolling platformer levels, including streets and a park.
- Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics — Tom and Jerry are playable characters in this cartoon-based, side-scrolling platformer.
- Top Gun: Guts & Glory — Flight combat simulator loosely based on *Top Gun* (1986) feature film.
- Top Rank Tennis — Four-player tennis title with voice effects.
- Torpedo Range — Control upgradeable submarine to seek out and destroy enemy forces.
- Total Carnage — Top-down shooter similar to *Smash T.V.*; based on the 1991 Midway coin-op.
- Toxic Crusaders — Side-scroller based on the environmental cartoon series.
- Toy Story — Control Woody as he runs, jumps, swings, ducks, and uses his lasso; based on the 1995 film.
- Track & Field — Includes all six events from Konami's 1983 coin-op classic.
- Track Meet — Includes 100 meters, hurdles, javelin throw, pole vault, long jump, discus throw, and weight lifting.
- Trax — Vertical scrolling vehicular shooter for up to four players; Link Cable compatible.
- True Lies — Overhead-view free-roaming shooter based on the 1994 feature film.
- TumblePop — *Bubble Bobble*-like platformer based on 1991 coin-op game.
- Turn and Burn: The F-14 Dogfight Simulator — Flight combat simulator featuring F-14 Tomcat.
- Turok: Battle of the Bionosaurs — Side-scrolling platformer based on *Turok* comic book series.
- Turrican — Platform shooter obviously inspired by *Metroid*.
- Ultima: Runes of Virtue — Handheld entry in the popular *Ultima* series; features 170+ levels.
- Ultima: Runes of Virtue II — RPG featuring 150+ levels, Link Cable compatibility, and four playable characters; also released for the SNES.
- Ultra Golf — Konami golf title with two courses and tournament play.
- Universal Soldier — Platform shooter similar to *Turrican*; based on the 1992 feature film.
- Urban Strike: The Sequel to Jungle Strike — Overhead-view free-roaming shooter also released for Game Gear, Genesis, and SNES.
- USHRA Monster Truck Wars — Top-down racer with six selectable, repairable, upgradeable trucks.
- Vegas Stakes — Super Game Boy enhanced take on SNES cart featuring blackjack, slots, and other gambling games.
- Wario Blast featuring Bomberman! — Top-down action game introducing Nintendo's Wario to the popular *Bomberman* series.
- Wario Land II — Super Game Boy enhanced side-scrolling platformer; also released for GBC.
- Wave Race — Top-down water racer for up to four players; includes three drivable boats.
- Wayne's World — Side-scrolling platformer based on 1992 feature film.
- WCW: The Main Event — World Championship Wrestling with Steve Austin and eight other wrestlers.
- We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story — Sixteen levels of side-scrolling action based on the 1993 animated film.
- Wheel of Fortune — Handheld take on TV game show; guess letters to spell out words and phrases.
- Who Framed Roger Rabbit — Action/adventure game based on 1998 animation/live action hybrid film.
- WildSnake — *Tetris*-style puzzler with Super Game Boy enhancements.
- Winter Olympic Games: Lillehammer '94 — Includes biathlon, downhill skiing, ski jumping, bob-sledding, downhill slalom skiing, speed ice skating, and aerial skiing.
- Wordtris — *Tetris*-inspired puzzler with letters and words instead of blocks.
- WordZap — Includes two letter-building word games; Link Cable compatible.
- World Bowling — Features two bowlers, different lanes and ball weights, and six countries.
- World Circuit Series — Top-down racer with three drivable cars: Formula 3, F-3000, and Formula 1.
- World Cup 98 — Super Game Boy enhanced soccer with isometric view.
- World Heroes 2 Jet — Super Game Boy enhanced version of 1994 SNK/ADK arcade fighter.
- WWF King of the Ring — Features Hulk Hogan, Shawn Michaels, Yokozuna, Randy Savage, Bret Hart, Lex Luger, and Razor Ramon.
- WWF Raw — Includes Doink, Diesel, Razor Ramon, Shawn Michaels, Bret Hart, The Undertaker, Yokozuna, and Lex Luger.
- WWF Superstars — Features Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Ultimate Warrior, Ted DiBiase, and Mr. Perfect.
- WWF Superstars 2 — Includes Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Sid Justice, Jake Roberts, The Mountie, and The Undertaker.

WWF War Zone — Super Game Boy enhanced wrestling game with Kane, Steve Austin, and others.

Xenon 2 — Five levels of vertical scrolling shooter action; the sequel to *Xenon* (arcade, 1988).

Yogi Bear's Gold Rush — Side-scrolling platformer starring Hanna-Barbera cartoon bear.

Yoshi — *Tetris*-inspired puzzler starring Mario, Little Goomba, and other Nintendo characters.

Yoshi's Cookie — Action puzzle; Mario sorts and stacks cookies to make them vanish.

Zen: Intergalactic Ninja — Side-scrolling platformer based on comic book series.

Zool: Ninja of the Nth Dimension — Side-scrolling platformer similar to *Sonic the Hedgehog*.

Zoop — Super Game Boy enhanced puzzler; eliminate colored shapes going inward from a four-sided grid.

GLOSSARY

Action: The vaguely descriptive word “action” is used to describe games in which players move objects or characters around the screen, but that don’t fall into any other category on this list. Activities include picking up items and transporting them to another part of the playfield, catching falling items, running around the screen collecting or dodging items, and much more.

Action Puzzle: A puzzle game that has players moving pieces around the screen and to their proper places within a set time, or at least in an action-oriented manner. The pieces are usually intended to be placed within a set pattern or configuration or matched up with similar pieces. Another type of action puzzle game requires players to touch squares or other areas of the playfield to complete various strategy-oriented objectives.

Action Strategy: Similar to strategy, but players typically take more direct control of the action, such as piloting a ship, shooting enemies, or guiding a character around a battlefield.

ADK: Short for Alpha Denshi Corporation, a Japanese video game company.

Adventure: Adventure games require players to guide an explorer, adventurer, or other such action-type hero through a number of areas. The setting is usually exotic, such as a jungle, a swamp, or an alien planet, and oftentimes there are puzzles to solve, items to collect, treasures to find, enemies to battle, levels to reach, things to climb, worlds to explore, etc. Climbing and platform games oftentimes include adventure elements, but contain enough of a predominance of

specific attributes to give them their own categories.

A.I.: Short for artificial intelligence, which, in the case of video games, refers to the ability of on-screen objects or characters to respond to computer-controlled commands. Or, it can refer to how smart a game is in general.

Aircraft Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using planes, spaceships, or other airborne vehicles.

Alternating: Multi-player games in which players take turns. Certain games, such as checkers and chess, in which players’ alternating moves directly affect the other player’s game, are considered to be simultaneous.

Anime: Refers to Japanese cartoons or the art style used therein. Role-playing games frequently employ anime-style art, which is typified by short, cartoonish characters with large eyes.

Arcade: A public place in which numerous coin-operated video games are available for play. Snack bars, pinball machines, pool tables, and other entertainments oftentimes supplement the arcade experience. Arcades did big business during the early 1980s with simple, but highly entertaining games like *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, and *Pac-Man* gobbling millions of quarters. Arcades experienced a resurgence in the early 1990s with the release of *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*. These days, however, most arcades consist primarily of elaborate racing simulations, dance machines, and ticket-redemption games.

Arcade Game: A coin-operated video game that is usually found in arcades, restaurants, bars, pool halls, and other public venues. Devotees of a specific arcade game will sometimes purchase the game in question for use in their home.

Art: Most art games focus on painting, drawing, and/or creating designs. Usually, the standard controller is used to move a pen, paint brush, or cursor, but some art games support a stylus that actually touches the screen.

Atari Lynx: Released in 1989, the Atari Lynx was the first handheld game system to boast a color LCD display. See Appendix V near the back of this book for more information.

Atari 2600: Released in 1977, the Atari 2600 (then called the Atari VCS) popularized home video games. It was followed by the Atari 5200 and Atari 7800. See *Classic Home Video Games, 1972–1984* for more info.

Backward-Compatible: Describes a video game system that can play a previously released system's games (in addition to its own). For example, the Game Boy Color is backward-compatible with the original Game Boy. Also refers to joysticks and other peripherals.

Ball-and-Paddle: *Pong*- or *Breakout*-like games in which players maneuver a paddle or other implement to rebound a bouncing ball across the screen (usually toward a paddle controlled by the other player), against a wall, or against rows of bricks or other items that disappear when hit.

Battery Backup: A game with battery backup contains a small battery within the cartridge, giving the game memory for saving progress, high scores, and/or other data.

Beat-'Em-Up: Side-scrolling combat games with lots of punching and kicking are often referred to as "beat-'em-ups."

Bit: Short for binary digit, which is a digit in the binary number system. Binary digits, which are in the form of zeroes and ones, are used as the basic units of information storage and communication in many video game systems. Most consoles released prior to the 16-bit Genesis are 8-bit systems.

Blind Jump: An annoying jump off a ledge (or other platform) where the player cannot see (or at least has no hint of) the danger below.

BMX Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using motocross bicycles. The tracks are usually hilly and made of dirt.

Board Game: A video game rendition of a traditional board game (such as checkers or backgammon), or an original game played on a virtual game board. Some video board games come packaged with actual game boards and pieces to supplement the onscreen action. The genre also covers certain pen-and-paper games, such as tic-tac-toe, and certain card games, such as *A Game of Concentration*.

Boat/Watercraft Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using boats, jet skis, or other water-based vehicles.

Boss: An enemy at the end of a level or a game that is usually fiercer, stronger, and larger than the standard enemies.

Business Simulator: A game that tries to emulate real-world business, such as investing in stocks, building a corporation, or managing a company. Strategy is usually involved.

Button-Masher: A game that requires little to no strategy, but success can be obtained by lots of shooting, punching, or other mindlessly fast button pushing. In the non-pejorative sense, a button-masher can simply refer to a game that requires quick, frequent pushes of one or more buttons.

Card Game: A game that uses virtual versions of traditional playing cards (aces, hearts, jacks, etc.), but with no gambling involved.

Cartridge: The plastic casing with ROM chip that is plugged into a video game console. Cartridges usually have labels on them bearing artwork and the game's title. It is recommended that the game system be turned off when a game cartridge is being inserted or pulled out of the console cartridge slot or port.

Casual Gamer: In general terms, a casual gamer plays video games only infrequently and/or only desires to play the less challenging or less complicated titles.

Character Racing: Non-sports racing in which players control a person, animal, or other character instead of a vehicle.

Cheap Hit: Refers to the negative effects caused by a poorly programmed projectile, enemy attack,

or other obstacle that is virtually (or entirely) unavoidable.

Cheat Code: A specific, secretive combination of button presses (oftentimes entered at the title or menu screen) that result in unlocking special occurrences (i.e. cheats) in a video game, such as starting the game with extra lives, unlimited continues, special powers, or the ability to level-select. Cheat code documentation is not in the purview of this book, but gamers can consult www.game-faqs.com for a wide variety of cheats for various consoles.

Checkpoint: A place in a video game, usually denoted by some type of graphical icon, where the game will save automatically (or at least continue from that point) if the player's character or other onscreen object reaches that area. After the player dies, play begins from that checkpoint (unless a further checkpoint has been passed).

Climbing: A game in which the primary activity is climbing ladders, ropes, vines, or other such objects. The goal in many climbing games (such as *Donkey Kong*) is to reach the top of the playfield, but it can also involve collecting items, jumping over obstacles, hitting (or otherwise defeating) enemies, and much more.

Clone: A game that copies a previously released game in a number of obvious ways.

Coin-op: Short for coin-operated video game. Also known as arcade game.

ColecoVision: Released in 1982, the ColecoVision is considered to be the first home game system to boast sophisticated arcade-quality graphics. See *Classic Home Video Games, 1972–1984* for more info.

Collision Detection: How accurate the onscreen objects are in coming in contact with or otherwise relating to each other in terms of the visual images they project to the player. A game with poor collision detection can result in unwarranted deaths, such as a missile that appears to miss the player, but kills him or her anyway.

Console: The base, or main part, of a video game system, irrespective of the wiring or controllers. Also used to refer to a game system in general.

Continue: Many games offer one or more “continues” after the player has run out of lives. This lets the player continue from the last level (or other area) where the previous game left off.

Control Pad: A flat controller that contains a directional pad and (usually two or more) action buttons.

Controller: The joystick, trackball, keypad, control pad, or other instrument used to maneuver onscreen objects.

Credits: The people or companies who designed, published, or were otherwise involved in the making of a game. In classic games, credits are usually listed in the instruction manual and/or on the title screen, but oftentimes only the companies are credited, not the actual programmers.

Cursor: A pointer, plus symbol, or other such object that moves freely around the screen via the controller. Cursors are frequently used as aiming devices for first-person or light gun shooting games, where they oftentimes appear as a cross-hair or a gun sight.

Cute-'Em-Up: A shooter, such as *Fantasy Zone*, with cute, cartoonish, brightly colored graphics.

D-Pad: Short for directional pad.

DC: Short for Dreamcast.

Dedicated System: A video game device, such as *Atari Super Pong* or *Mattel Auto Race*, that only plays the game (or games) contained within the unit itself. A dedicated system will not accept cartridges, discs, or other such media.

Demolition/Combat Racing: Racing that involves crashing into, shooting, or otherwise damaging the other car(s).

Developer: A company or person who played a key role in the actual designing of a game. If the company that developed the game is unknown, the publisher is usually given the credit, making the publisher a “ghost developer” of sorts.

Digital Controller: A joystick or other control device that uses on/off signals to move onscreen objects in four directions, plus combinations thereof (such as up/right or down/left for diagonal movement).

Directional Pad: Replacing the joystick as the digital input mechanism of choice, directional pads (also called control pads) are utilized by most game systems from the mid-1980s to the present. A d-pad (as it's often called) is a flat, thumb-operated, plus-shaped (usually) object that allows players to move onscreen objects up, down, right, and left (and oftentimes diagonally by using com-

binations of two buttons). The NES popularized this type of controller.

Drag Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using dragsters.

Dreamcast: Released in 1999, the Dreamcast was Sega's follow-up to the Saturn.

DS: Short for Nintendo DS.

Dungeon Crawler: A term referring to the type of action-oriented role-playing game in which the hero navigates labyrinthine dungeons, caverns, and/or other such areas, collecting treasures and battling enemies along the way. Oftentimes, dungeon crawlers are light on plot and heavy on kills.

Easter Egg: A hidden item in a video game program, such as the designer's initials or a secret level.

Educational: A game in which the intended outcome is for the player to learn about words, numbers, geography, music, or other subjects. Educational games usually emphasize learning over action, but frequently incorporate elements of action, climbing, shooting, or other genres.

English: Putting indirect (or at least subtle) influence on the direction of an onscreen item (usually a bouncing ball).

Entertainment Software Rating Board: Established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association, the ESRB is the self-regulatory organization that assigns content-based letter grades to video games (such as E for Everyone, T for Teen, and M for Mature 17+). It serves roughly the same purpose as the motion picture ratings system and was founded as a result of congressional hearings (circa 1992 and '93) on video game violence, which was more pronounced with the release of the 16-bit systems, and its effect on society.

ESRB: Short for Entertainment Software Rating Board.

Eye-Hand Coordination: The degree of ability one has to guide the movements of the hands in conjunction with the images one sees. During the early 1980s, when video games came under attack for wasting players' time or for being too violent, apologists frequently touted the increased eye-hand coordination that would purportedly come as a result of playing the games.

Famicom: Released in 1983, the Famicom is the Japanese system that was brought to the U.S. as the Nintendo NES.

Fighting: A non-boxing, non-wrestling, non-scrolling fighting game in which players control a character that engages in fights (punches, kicks, etc.) with other characters. Usually, fights are best two-out-of-three.

First-Party Company: A company that develops or publishes a game for their own video game system.

First-Person Shooter: The term "first-person shooter" usually refers to first-person perspective games in which a character walks around toting weapons and shooting. However, it can also refer to games that involve sitting in the cockpit of a ship, looking through a view screen, shooting most anything that moves. Frequently a cursor or gun sight is used in helping players aim their shots. Space combat simulators frequently incorporate this type of first-person shooting action, but are generally more complicated in terms of objectives and controls. First-person shooters can also refer to the type of target games that usually require a light gun, but that don't offer light gun support.

First-Person Tank Shooter: A slow, methodical shooter like Atari's *Battlezone*, in which players view the action as though sitting inside a tank, looking out the main view screen.

Flight Combat Simulator: Similar to a space combat simulator, but players pilot a plane or chopper instead of a spaceship. Unlike flight simulators, flight combat simulators involve at least some shooting.

Flight Simulator: A game that tries to emulate actual plane, rocket, helicopter, or other airborne flight as accurately as possible. Usually, the player must operate a variety of controls depicted on an instrument panel.

FMV: Short for full-motion video.

Forced Scrolling: When the screen scrolls of its own accord, independent of player movement. The player is usually required to proceed at a certain pace in order to keep up.

Formula-1/Indy Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using a Formula-1 or Indy racecar. Many racing games of this type try to be at least somewhat realistic.

Fortune Teller Simulator: A novelty video game that tries to tell of the player's past or predict his or her future.

FPS: Short for first-person shooter or frames per second.

Frame Rate: The frequency in which video frames are displayed on a television set or other monitor. The more frames per second (fps), the better the fluidity of motion.

Full-Motion Video: With the release of the Sega CD and other disc-based systems in the early 1990s, full-motion video, which is prerecorded animation or live-action video footage, became a popular way to display graphical images in video games. In some games, full-motion video appears only during intros and/or cut scenes and is used to complement the in-game, sprite-based graphics.

Futuristic Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using a sci-fi type of car or other such land-based vehicle.

Gambling: Blackjack, roulette, poker, slots, or any other Vegas-style game that involves the wagering of virtual money.

Game Boy: Released in 1989, the Game Boy was Nintendo's first handheld system. See Appendix VI near the back of this book for more info.

Game Boy Advance: Released in 1999, the Game Boy Advance was the 32-bit follow-up to Nintendo's Game Boy Color.

Game Boy Advance SP: Released in 2003, the Game Boy Advance SP was an upgrade over the Game Boy Advance, finally providing a lit (back lit or front lit, depending on the model) screen. The SP plays the same titles as the Game Boy Advance.

Game Boy Color: Released in 1998, the Game Boy Color was Nintendo's follow-up to the original Game Boy, adding color, crisper images, and longer battery life to the handheld format.

Game Gear: Released in 1991, the Game Gear was Sega's more sophisticated (yet less popular) answer to Nintendo's handheld Game Boy.

Game Show: A game like *Wheel of Fortune* or *Family Feud*, in which players take part in a virtual rendition of a TV game show. Contestants usually compete for cash or prizes by answering trivia questions, solving word puzzles, or other such activities.

Game System: A video game machine, complete with console, wiring, and controllers. Usually

refers to the type of system that hooks up to a television set and accepts plug-in cartridges, discs, or other ROM media. Handheld units are sometimes called game systems as well.

GameCube: Released in 2001, the GameCube was Nintendo's follow-up to the Nintendo 64.

Gameplay: How well a game plays (or how a game plays in general) independent of accompanying graphical or sound considerations.

GB: Short for Game Boy.

GBA: Short for Game Boy Advance.

GC: Short for GameCube.

Genesis: Short for Sega Genesis.

Genre: The type of game, such as shooter, maze, or side-scrolling platform. Many games incorporate a number of genres, but most have a dominant type of gameplay mechanic.

Go-Kart Racing: Pioneered by *Super Mario Kart* for the Super NES, go-kart racing games are arcade-style in nature and consist of racing against the clock or another player(s), using go-karts and go-kart-like vehicles. The view is typically from behind the player's car.

Graphics: Computer-generated images depicted on a television screen or other monitor.

Great Video Game Crash: Due to a number of factors, including competition from increasingly cheap personal computers and a glut of awful, cheaply produced games (many of them by third-party companies), the home video game industry took a nose dive in late 1983 and all but disappeared in 1984. With the release of the Nintendo NES in 1985, the hobby once again assumed a dominant place in popular culture.

Hack-'n'-Slash: An action-oriented game in which the protagonist uses a sword (or similar implement) to hack and slash his or her way through numerous enemies, usually in a fantasy or futuristic setting. Elements of hand-to-hand combat and platforming are frequently involved.

Hardcore Gamer: The type of player who spends a large percentage of his or her life playing, purchasing, talking about, and otherwise obsessing over video games. Hardcore gamers are usually competitive, meaning they keep track of their scores, catalogue the games they have beaten, take on challenging games, and/or take pride in their prowess.

Hardware: The game console itself (as opposed to software or peripheral items).

Homebrew: A game that is developed (and oftentimes distributed and published) by a fan or amateur programmer.

Hyperspace: Transporting a spaceship instantly to another area of the screen or the game by simply pressing a button or entering the ship into a specific area. The ship in question usually disappears and reappears in the blink of an eye. Similar to warp, but less versatile in nature.

Intellivision: Released in 1979, the Intellivision was Mattel's more sophisticated alternative to Atari's ubiquitous Atari 2600 system. See *Classic Home Video Games, 1972–1984* for more info.

Interactive Movie: A game like *Dragon's Lair* (arcade, various) or *Cobra Command* (arcade, Sega CD) that uses full-motion video (as opposed to sprites or some other method) to display onscreen images.

Isometric Action Role-Playing Game: A role-playing game in which the action scrolls diagonally and is viewed at an angled/overhead perspective (also known as 3/4 perspective). Combat is usually turn-based, with the game containing such typical RPG elements as character building, exploration, and item collecting.

Joystick: Used for moving objects around the screen, a joystick is a handheld device attached to a game console, usually by a wire. Most joysticks are mounted on a base and contain at least one "fire" or "action" button for shooting, jumping, or other such maneuvers. Also, most joysticks are digital (at least for classic systems), but some, such as the Atari 5200 joystick, offer analog control.

Killer App: Short for killer application.

Killer Application: Refers to a console-specific, must-have game that is popular enough to help sell lots of hardware. *Sonic the Hedgehog* for the Genesis is a good example of a classic game that moved a lot of systems.

Launch Title: A video game that is released in stores the same day as its accompanying system.

Light Gun Shooter: Any game that allows the use of a light pistol, rifle, or other gun peripheral. Players point the gun at the screen and fire at aliens, ducks, bad guys, or other targets.

Maze: Most maze games involve guiding a character (such as Pac-Man) through a maze or mazes, eating dots (or other small items) while avoiding enemies. Many maze games include special edible items that let the character turn the tables on its enemies. Certain maze games, such as *Dig Dug* and *Mr. Do!*, let the character dig (or otherwise create) its own maze-like pathways.

Maze Shooter: Instead of eating dots or digging tunnels as in standard maze games, maze shooters have the protagonist shooting enemies and/or the other player's character.

Mech: A futuristic vehicle, oftentimes a war machine outfitted with arms, legs, weaponry, and a human pilot.

Mega Drive: Released in Japan in 1988, the Mega Drive is the Japanese version of the Sega Genesis.

Mini-Game: A small bonus game or contest contained somewhere within the main game. Mini-games usually award extra lives, points, powers, or other goodies. Alternatively, mini-games are sometimes selectable via a menu screen and played independently of the standard game.

Miniature/Radio Control Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using the types of toy cars, trucks, or other vehicles that run via remote control.

Mission-Based Racing: A game in which the player drives a car or other vehicle around city streets or other pathways, trying to perform specific objectives beyond simply reaching the finishing line, racing against the timer, or competing against other drivers. Such missions can include finding hidden treasure or completing levels.

MLB: Short for Major League Baseball.

MLBPA: Short for Major League Baseball Player's Association.

Monster Truck Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using monster trucks. Elements of demolition/combat racing are sometimes involved.

Motorcycle Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using motorcycles.

Multi-Game Compilation: A cartridge that contains four or more games of different genres.

Multi-Genre Game: A game that contains four or more complete and separate types of genres.

Multi-Platform Game: A game, such as *Samurai Shodown*, that is available for numerous (or at least more than one) game system.

Multi-Tap Adapter: A peripheral that hooks to a game system and lets players attach additional controllers, allowing for simultaneous multi-player action.

Musical Instrument/Band Simulator: Whether designed for a physical instrument (such as the keyboard in *The Miracle Piano Teaching System* for the Genesis) or a standard controller, this type of game attempts to replicate the experience of performing music. Usually, players must follow the melody of the song (or create songs of their own) by pressing buttons on the controller. *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* are modern versions of this type of game.

N64: Short for Nintendo 64.

Naval Combat Simulator: A game, such as *Sub Hunt* for the Intellivision, that puts the player at the helm of a nautical vehicle (or fleet of vehicles), using realistic and oftentimes complicated control techniques to command the ship(s) in question.

NBA: Short for National Basketball Association.

NEC: Established in Japan in 1898 as a telephone manufacturing company, the Nippon Electric Company, along with Hudson Soft, went on to develop the TurboGrafx-16.

Neo Geo: See the Neo Geo chapter in this book.

Neo Geo CD: Released in 1994, the Neo Geo CD was an add-on to the Neo Geo console. See Appendix I near the back of this book for more info.

Neo Geo Pocket Color: Released in 1999, the Neo Geo Pocket Color was SNK's handheld system.

NES: Short for Nintendo Entertainment System.

Next-Generation System: A game console that is not only new (or soon to be released), but that is also cutting edge in design and execution. Generally speaking, it should be more powerful and have better graphics and sounds than previous systems.

NFL: Short for National Football League.

NFLPA: Short for National Football League Players Association.

NGPC: Short for Neo Geo Pocket Color.

NHL: Short for National Hockey League.

NHLPA: Short for National Hockey League Players Association.

Nintendo: Established in Japan as a hanafuda card company in 1889, Nintendo eventually became a video game giant, producing some of the world's most beloved games, characters, and consoles.

Nintendo Entertainment System: Released in America in 1985, the NES is home to numerous groundbreaking titles, including *The Legend of Zelda*, *Metroid*, and *Super Mario Bros.* Like the Atari 2600 had done for Atari back in the late '70s and early '80s, the NES made "Nintendo" synonymous with "video game" (at least until the proliferation of Sony's PlayStation). See *Classic Home Video Games, 1985–1988* for more info.

Nintendo 64: Released in 1996, the Nintendo 64 was Nintendo's follow-up to the Super Nintendo.

Non-Scrolling Platform: A game in which the lead character runs, jumps, and otherwise works his or her way around a series of beams, blocks, floors of a building, or any other type of platform. There are often obstacles to jump over, elevators to ride, enemies to avoid, and things to climb (but not as much climbing as in actual climbing games).

Non-Scrolling Shooter: Any fixed-screen shooter that does not fall into the slide-and-shoot, light gun, first-person, or other shooter categories.

Nudge: A video pinball term used to describe "pushing" on the table or putting English on the ball.

Number Puzzle: Most number puzzle games have players decoding, arranging, or otherwise strategically manipulating numbers, but without enough actual math involved to qualify as an educational title.

One-Hit Death: When all it takes is one punch, bullet, or other such attack to kill a character. While most modern games (and many games listed in this book) incorporate health bars, shields, and other such avenues for allowing the player's character to get hit numerous times, older games often employ one-hit deaths.

Overhead View Free-Roaming Shooter: A scrolling shooter like *Jungle Strike*, in which the player's vehicle or character can point, shoot, and move in all directions, and the screen scrolls along with it.

A game like *Asteroids* has somewhat similar movement, but the screen doesn't scroll, so it belongs in the non-scrolling shooter category.

Pack-In Game: A video game that is included as an accessory with a game system, a keyboard, or other such item.

Parallax Scrolling: Pioneered by the arcade version of *Moon Patrol* (Williams, 1982), this type of scrolling occurs when layered, translucent images scroll on top of each other at various speeds and directions to give the graphics the illusion of depth.

Password: A method for saving progress, even after a game system has been reset or turned off. When players reach various points in certain games, the computer will generate code words or symbols that the player can use to automatically return to those points at a later time.

Pause: Pushing a button to freeze a game in progress so that players may take a break from the action and return later exactly where they left off.

Peripheral: A joystick, voice module, or most any other item that is compatible with a game system, but is not actual hardware or software.

Pinball: In pinball games, players operate at least one pair of flippers, hitting a bouncing ball around a table filled with spinners, bumpers, and/or other targets.

Pixel: Short for picture element, referring to illuminated points (small graphic units) on the screen. Pixels combine to form images. The more pixels per inch, the sharper the display.

Pixelated: When the individual pixels of an on-screen image are blatantly noticeable, those graphics are sometimes referred to as being pixelated.

Platform: The specific brand, model, or type of video game system.

Platform Shooter: A game like *Contra* or *Earthworm Jim* in which the lead character runs, jumps, and otherwise works his or her way around and/or across a series of beams, blocks, floors of a building, or any other type of platform, shooting enemies along the way. There are often obstacles to jump over, elevators to ride, things to climb, and other such elements.

Playable: Games described as being playable lack the type of egregious flaw (such as horrible con-

trols or a bug in the program) that would make a game utterly beyond recommendation, regardless of any other aspect of the game.

Player: The human being who is actually playing the game. Or, it can refer to a specific type of video game character, such as an athlete (a basketball player, for example).

Playfield: The area on the screen where the gaming action takes place. Usually refers to the entire screen, but only when the game is not in title mode, selection mode, or other non-action mode.

PlayStation: Released in 1995, the PlayStation was Sony's first game console. It was a rousing success, selling tens of millions of consoles.

PlayStation Portable: Released in 2005, the PSP was Sony's first handheld system.

PlayStation Store: An online service that lets PlayStation 3 and PSP owners download classic (as well as newly released) games to their console.

PlayStation 2: Released in 2000, the PS2 was Sony's hugely successful follow-up to the original PlayStation.

PlayStation 3: Released in 2006, the PS3 was Sony's follow-up to the PlayStation 2.

Political Simulator: This type of game has players participating in some form or fashion in a virtual political process. Action elements are sometimes involved, but the overriding theme is political in nature.

Pong: Released in 1972, *Pong* was the first commercially successful arcade game, leading to numerous clones and copycats, including the ubiquitous ball-and-paddle games available for the home (as dedicated units or game cartridges). *Pong* was created by Nolan Bushnell, the legendary founder of Atari.

Port: A game that has been translated from one system or format to another. The term is commonly used to describe a home console version of an arcade game.

Power-Up: Icons, symbols, or other objects that can be maneuvered over or otherwise grabbed to enhance the character or vehicle the player is controlling. Power-ups are sometimes obtained by defeating enemies.

Prototype: A professionally designed game that exists in some form (such as a label-less cartridge), but was never officially released to the

public. Prototype games, which are oftentimes incomplete, usually command a premium on the collector's market due to scarcity.

PS1: Short for PlayStation (the "1" designation came into being with the release of the PlayStation 2).

PSP: Short for PlayStation Portable.

PS2: Short for PlayStation 2.

PS3: Short for PlayStation 3.

PSX: Short for PlayStation.

Publisher: A person or company who plays a key role in paying for, manufacturing, distributing, marketing, or otherwise making sure a game gets produced and sold.

Rally/Off-Road Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s) outdoors around tracks of varying terrain, such as dirt or mud. Sometimes tracks aren't even involved. BMX and monster truck racing usually contain elements of rally/off-road, but are specific enough to warrant their own categories.

Rapid Fire: When the character, ship, or other shooting implement can shoot at a fast, constant rate (as opposed to slower, more methodical shooting). Depending on the game, this is done by pressing the fire button rapidly or simply holding it down.

Raster Graphics: The type of onscreen images that are made up of pixels or collections of pixels. Also referred to as bitmapped images.

Real-Time Strategy: This type of game has players performing such relatively complicated tasks as gathering and managing resources, deploying troops, developing technology, constructing buildings, and more. Unlike turn-based strategy titles, in which players take turns making their moves, RTS games have players going about their business at the same time. Most experts consider *Utopia* for the Intellivision to be the first real-time strategy game.

Role-Playing Game: An RPG is a game in which players assume the role of a character (or band of characters) who undertakes a lengthy quest that is more complicated in nature than that found in the typical action or adventure game. The character(s) in question can usually gain powers (such as magic) and/or weapons (such as special swords) as he or she completes missions or engages in bat-

tles contained within the overall quest. Battles can be action-oriented or determined in less direct fashion, such as a comparison of the characters' attributes.

ROM: Short for read only memory, which is memory data that can be read by the computer. Most video game cartridges contain ROM.

RPG: Short for role-playing game.

Saturn: Short for Sega Saturn.

Scrolling: In games that employ scrolling, players maneuver an object around large, contiguous playfields. Some games scroll in all directions while others limit the action to right and left, up and down, or in just one direction (usually up or to the right).

Sega: Established in Honolulu, Hawaii as Standard Games (later Service Games), Sega began by producing coin-operated games for American soldiers living in military bases. The company moved to Tokyo shortly thereafter and would go on to create popular arcade games and home video game consoles and software.

Sega CD: Released in 1992, the Sega CD was a disc-based add-on to the Genesis. See Appendix II near the back of this book for more info.

Sega Club: A series of video games for the Genesis aimed at kids.

Sega Genesis: See the Sega Genesis chapter in this book.

Sega Master System: Released in 1986, the Master System was Sega's first console, predating the Genesis by three years.

Sega Pico: Released in 1994, the Pico was a cartridge-based educational game system aimed at kids.

Sega Saturn: Released in 1995, the Saturn was Sega's follow-up to the Sega 32X.

Sega 32X: Released in 1994, the 32X was a disappointing add-on to the Sega Genesis. See Appendix III near the back of this book for more info.

Sega 32X CD: Games with the "Sega 32X CD" label require the Sega Genesis, Sega CD, and Sega 32X to run.

Shields: Many classic games feature one-hit deaths, but some let players use shields, which temporarily make the ship or character invulnerable or able to withstand at least one hit.

Shooter: Any type of game in which shooting plays the dominant role.

Side-Scrolling Combat: A fighting game in which the protagonist moves from left to right (usually), punching, kicking, hacking, slashing, or otherwise battling enemy after enemy after enemy. Sometimes there are weapons to pick up, obstacles to avoid, and/or fighting moves to gain.

Side-Scrolling Platform: An action-heavy game in which the protagonist moves from left to right (usually), jumping across gaps and on top of various platforms. Sometimes there are things to climb on and swing on, and there are frequently enemies and/or obstacles to avoid or defeat.

Side-Scrolling Shooter: A shooting game like *Thunder Force* or *Gaijars* in which the action scrolls to the right and/or left. Horizontal shooting is usually involved, and sometimes the player's ship can drop bombs on enemies and/or targets.

Simultaneous: Multi-player games in which at least two of the players play at the same time.

Slide-and-Shoot: A non-scrolling game like *Space Invaders '91* in which the player maneuvers a ship or other shooting implement right and left in a straight line along the bottom of the screen, firing upward at aliens, ships, or other enemies and/or obstacles.

Slowdown: Graphical images that slow down when they're not supposed to. This sometimes occurs when the hardware (or the programming involved in the software) is not fully up to the task of moving numerous onscreen images at once.

Smart Bomb: Smart bombs destroy (or at least damage) most or all onscreen enemies. This type of weapon was popularized by the arcade classic, *Defender*.

SMS: Short for Sega Master System.

SNES: Short for Super Nintendo.

SNK: Established in Japan in 1978, SNK, which started as Shin Nihon Kikaku, was instrumental in creating the Neo Geo arcade and home systems.

Software: Cartridges or other forms of media that are plugged (or otherwise inserted) into game systems (hardware) in order to play the games. Also refers to computer applications.

Space Combat Simulator: A first-person (or sometimes third-person) shooter set in outer

space, but with more elaborate and oftentimes more realistic features and objectives than a simple shooter.

Special Move: A maneuver in a fighting game (such as *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter II*) that causes the character to perform a move that is typically splashier, more elaborate, and more powerful than a simple punch or kick. It usually requires a complicated (or at least out of the ordinary) manipulation of the controller buttons and/or joystick.

Split-Screen: When the playfield is divided into two separate, distinct, but oftentimes interrelated areas. Usually, one player pays attention to one half of the screen while the other player concentrates on the other half.

Sports: This self-explanatory genre covers a variety of sports simulations, but when the sport represented is altered considerably (such as when a tennis title is actually a ball-and-paddle game), that is taken into consideration when designating that game with a genre.

Sports Car Racing: Racing against the clock or another player(s), using standard sports cars instead of racecars or other vehicles.

Sprite: A graphic image, oftentimes animated, that the player can interact with and manipulate. Most classic video games use sprite-based graphics.

Stealth: In most stealth games, players must infiltrate or escape enemy quarters without getting caught. Although shooting and weapons usage in general play key roles, the emphasis is on the avoidance of enemies and moving past them undetected. Battles that do occur usually demand good timing, accuracy, and keen observation of the surroundings.

Stock Car Racing: Racing against the clock or another player (s), usually around oval tracks, using the types of cars driven by NASCAR racers.

Strategy: A game in which skillful planning, tactical maneuvering, and/or calculated management takes precedence over direct control of the action.

Strategy Role-Playing Game: Like most RPGs, strategy role-playing games generally feature some or all of such elements as experience points, hit points, conversations with characters, and item acquisition. However, an emphasis is placed

on strategic and tactical aspects of the game, such as those found in a military simulation.

Super Famicom: Released in 1990, the Super Famicom is the Japanese version of the Super Nintendo.

Super Game Boy: An adapter cartridge that plugs into the cartridge slot of the Super Nintendo and lets users play standard Game Boy games (as well as black-cartridge Game Boy Color games) on the Super NES (using Super NES controllers). Certain specially programmed Game Boy titles, including *Donkey Kong* and *Space Invaders*, offer such additional features as more colors and a graphical border when played through the Super NES.

Super Nintendo: Released in 1991, the Super Nintendo (or Super NES) was the 16-bit follow-up to the Nintendo NES. The Super Nintendo was a direct competitor with the Sega Genesis.

Tank Shooter: A game in which the player maneuvers a tank around the playfield, shooting at another player's tank or at any number of ships, enemies, or other obstacles. (First-person tank shooters are given their own category.)

TG: Short for TurboGrafx-16.

TG-16: Short for TurboGrafx-16.

Third-Party Company: A company that develops or publishes a game for a system of another company. Activision's releases for the Atari 2600 are classic, textbook examples of third-party games.

Third-Person Action Role-Playing Game: Most third-person action RPGs are at least somewhat similar to *The Legend of Zelda*, in which players view their character (usually a solo figure) from overhead as he or she engages in real-time battles. Real-time swordplay and/or other actions are generally at least on par (in terms of importance to the game) with exploration, character-building, and other RPG elements.

Third-Person Graphic Adventure: Similar to first-person graphic adventure, but, instead of seeing the action through the eyes of the character, the character is visible onscreen.

Third-Person Role-Playing Game: An RPG in which players view their character or party of characters from a third-person perspective, usually from overhead or from the side. Unlike third-person *action* RPGs, these types of games

usually (but not always) feature turn-based battles.

Third-Person Shooter: A game like *Space Harrier* or *After Burner*, in which players view the character, ship, or other bullet-spewing implement of destruction from behind.

3DO: Released in 1993, the 3DO was Panasonic's pricey 32-bit console.

32X: Short for Sega 32X.

Tile Puzzle: A game like *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye*, in which players match tiles bearing similar patterns in order to remove them from the screen.

Turbo: In certain racing games, players can use turbo (sometimes called "nitro") to give their vehicle an extra boost of speed. Turbo power frequently appears in the form of power-ups that can be driven over or purchased. Turbo can also enhance player performance in such titles as *NBA Jam*.

TurboGrafx-CD: Released in 1990, the TurboGrafx-CD was a pricey, disc-based add-on for the TurboGrafx-16. See Appendix IV near the back of this book for more info.

TurboGrafx-16: See the TurboGrafx-16 chapter in this book.

Turn-Based Strategy: The type of strategy game where each player finishes all of his or her maneuverings and actions for a turn prior to the next player taking their turn. Many board games employ this technique, but they fall under the board game umbrella.

Vector Graphics: Onscreen images that are comprised of lines, points, arcs, angles, and other geometric shapes. A vector is a pair of end points on an x-y matrix. The Vectrex system, which displays vector graphics, is a rarity in the arena of classic home game systems as most employ raster graphics.

Vertical Scrolling Platform: Unlike the far more common side-scrolling platform games, which move horizontally, the action in vertical scrolling platformers moves up and/or down the screen.

Vertical Scrolling Shooter: A game like *Truxton* in which the player's ship, character, or other shooting implement travels upward (or possibly downward, but only on rare occasions), firing away at various airborne and/or ground-based enemies, targets, and other objects.

Warp: Transporting a ship, character, or other object instantly to another area of the screen or the game by simply pressing a button or entering a specific area. The object in question usually disappears and reappears in the blink of an eye. Similar to hyperspace, but more versatile in nature.

Wii: Released in 2006, the Wii was Nintendo's follow-up to the GameCube. Using the Virtual Console portion of the Wii Shop Channel, players can download various games for the Genesis, Neo Geo, TurboGrafx-16, and various other consoles.

Wii Virtual Console: A section of the Wii Shop Channel that lets players download games for the NES, Super NES, Neo Geo, Genesis, TurboGrafx-16, and other classic systems on to the Nintendo Wii. The service offers new content as well.

Word Puzzle: Word scramblers, word searches, and other types of puzzle games involving letters and words belong to this genre. Educational titles often involve letters and words, but are more geared toward younger players learning how to spell or read.

World-Building Simulator: A strategy game that lets players create a virtual world to their liking. Once the world has been formed, players can manage the world's armies, citizens, goods, and/or various other aspects.

Xbox: Released in 2001, the original Xbox was computer giant Microsoft's first video game console.

Xbox 360: Released in 2005, the Xbox 360 was Microsoft's follow-up to the Xbox.

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INDEX

- AAAHH!!! Real Monsters 38
Abrams Battle Tank 135
Action 52 39
The Addams Family 39, 295, 299
The Addams Family: Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt 299
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons:
 Curse of the Azure Bonds 63
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons:
 Pool of Radiance 63
Adventure Island 271, 299
Adventure Island II: Aliens in Paradise 299
The Adventures of Batman and Robin 39, 287
The Adventures of Dr. Franken 301
The Adventures of Mighty Max 39
The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends 40, 299
The Adventures of Star Saver 299
The Adventures of Willy Beamish 288
Aero Blasters 42, 253
Aero Fighters 8
Aero Fighters 2 8, 285
Aero Fighters 3 8, 285
Aero the Acro-Bat 40, 248
Aero the Acro-Bat 2 40
Aerobiz 40, 41
Aerobiz Supersonic 41
Aerostar 299
After Burner 42, 94, 108, 293, 321
After Burner II 41, 104, 107
After Burner III 42, 288
After Burner: Black Falcon 42
After Burner Climax 42
Aggressors of Dark Combat 8, 285
AH3 Thunderstrike 288
Air Buster 42, 253
Air Diver 42
Air Zonk 253, 296
Airwolf 77
Al Michaels Announces Hardball III 42, 112
Aladdin 42–43, 124, 161, 299
Alex Kidd in Miracle World 43
Alex Kidd in Shinobi World 188
Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle 36, 43
Alfred Chicken 299
Alien Crush 87, 253–254, 261–262, 280
Alien Olympics 2044 AD 299
Alien Storm 43
Alien 3 44, 299
Alien vs. Predator: The Last of His Clan 299
Alisia Dragoon 44
All-Star Baseball '99 299
Alleyway 299
Alpha Mission 9, 285
Alpha Mission II 9, 285
Altered Beast 3, 36, 37, 44, 196, 272
Altered Beast: Guardian of the Realms 44
Altered Space: A 3-D Alien Adventure 299
Amazing Penguin 299
The Amazing Spider-Man 299, 307
The Amazing Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin 200, 288
The Amazing Spider-Man: Web of Fire 293
Amazing Tater 299
American Gladiators 44
Amidar 250
Andre Agassi Tennis 44
André Panza Kick Boxing 254
Andro Dunos 9
Android Assault 288
Animaniacs 45, 299
Another World 159
A.P.B. 297
The Aquatic Games Starring James Pond and the Aquabats 45
Arcade Classic No. 1: Asteroids/Missile Command 299
Arcade Classic No. 2: Centipede/Millipede 299
Arcade Classic No. 3: Galaga/Galaxian 299
Arcade Classic No. 4: Defender/Joust 299
Arcade Classics 45
Arch Rivals 30, 46, 114, 150, 266
Arch Rivals: A Basketbrawl! 46, 121
Arch Rivals: The Arcade Game 46
Arcus Odyssey 46
Ariel: Disney's The Little Mermaid 46
Arkanoid 263, 299
Armor Ambush 76
Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf 46
Arrow Flash 47
Art Alive 47, 102, 236
Art of Fighting 7–8, 10, 13, 15, 29, 34, 47, 285–287
Art of Fighting 2 10, 285
Art of Fighting 3: Path of the Warrior 10
Art of Fighting Anthology 8, 10
Assault 109
Asterix and the Great Rescue 47
Asteroids 186, 239, 299, 311, 318
The Astyanax 270
Atari Super Pong 313
Atomic Punk 299
Atomic Robo-Kid 47, 48
Atomic Runner 48
ATP Tour Championship Tennis 48
Attack of the Killer Tomatoes 299
Avenging Spirit 299
Awesome Golf 297
Awesome Possum Kicks Dr. Machino's Butt! 48
AWS Pro Moves Soccer 48
A/X-101 288
Axe Battler: A Legend of Golden Axe 108
Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP II 49, 209
Back to the Future 49
Back to the Future Part III 49
Bad Dudes 107
Ballblazer 298
Ballistix 254
Balloon Boy 102
Balloon Fight 299
Balloon Kid 299

- Ballz 49
 Ballz: The Director's Cut 49
 Bandai Golf: Challenge Pebble Beach 163
 Barbie Game Girl 300
 Barbie Super Model 49
 Barkley: Shut Up and Jam! 50
 Barkley: Shut Up and Jam! 2 50
 Barney's Hide & Seek Game 50
 Bart Simpson's Escape from Camp Deadly 300
 Baseball 300
 Baseball Heroes 297
 Baseball Stars 10
 Baseball Stars 2 10, 11, 285
 Baseball Stars II 10
 Baseball Stars Color 10
 Baseball Stars Professional 10, 285
 Bases Loaded for Game Boy 300
 BasketBrawl 297
 BASS Masters Classic 50, 51
 BASS Masters Classic: Pro Edition 50, 51
 BASS Masters 2000 51
 Batman 52
 Batman Forever 51, 300
 Batman: Return of the Joker 52, 300
 Batman Returns 51, 288, 297
 Batman: Revenge of the Joker 52
 Batman: The Animated Series 300
 Batman: The Video Game 52, 300
 Battle Arena Toshinden 300
 Battle Bull 300
 Battle Frenzy 288
 Battle Mania Daiginjou 229
 Battle Royale 255
 Battle Squadron 52
 Battle Unit Zeoth 300
 Battlecorps 288
 Battlemaster 52, 53
 Battleship 306
 Battletank 208
 BattleTech: A Game of Armored Combat 53
 Battletoads 53, 300
 Battletoads/Double Dragon: The Ultimate Team 53, 300
 Battletoads in Ragnarok's World 300
 BattleWheels 297
 Battlezone 297, 314
 Battlezone/Super Breakout 300
 Battlezone 2000 297
 BC Racers 288, 293
 Beast Wrestler 53–54
 Beauty and the Beast: Belle's Quest 54
 Beauty and the Beast: Roar of the Beast 54
 Beavis and Butt-head 55, 300
 Beetlejuice 300
 Beggar Prince 55, 131
 Beraboh Man 258
 The Berenstain Bears' Camping Adventure 55
 Best of the Best: Championship Karate 55, 300
 Beyond Oasis 56
 Beyond Shadowgate 295
 Bible Adventures 56
 Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure 297
 Bill & Ted's Excellent Game Boy Adventure 300
 Bill Elliot's NASCAR Fast Tracks 300
 Bill Walsh College Football 56, 288
 Bill Walsh College Football 95 56–57, 73
 Bimini Run 57
 Bio-Hazard Battle 57, 239
 Bionic Battler 300
 Bionic Commando 33, 300
 Black Bass Lure Fishing 300
 Black Hole Assault 288
 Blackthorne 293
 Blades of Steel 282, 300
 Blades of Vengeance 57
 Blaster Master 57, 300
 Blaster Master Boy 58, 300
 Blaster Master: Enemy Below 58
 Blaster Master 2 57
 Blazing Lazers 252, 255
 Blockbuster World Video Game Championships 2 58
 Blockout 58, 297
 Bloody Wolf 255–256
 Blue Lightning 297
 The Blues Brothers 300
 Blue's Journey 10, 11, 285
 Bo Jackson: Two Games in One 300
 B.O.B. 58
 Boggle Plus 300
 Bomberman 140, 252, 256, 259–260
 Bomberman 64 256
 Bomberman '93 252, 256
 Bomberman '94 141
 Bomberman GB 300
 Bomberman Jetters 256
 Bomberman Land 256
 Bomberman World 256
 Bonanza Bros. 58–59
 Bonk 3: Bonk's Big Adventure 252, 256–257, 295
 Bonkers 59
 Bonk's Adventure 71, 252, 257, 300
 Bonk's Revenge 252, 257, 300
 Booby Kids 260
 Boogerman: A Pick and Flick Adventure 59–60
 Boomer's Adventure in Asmik World 300
 Boulder Dash 94, 123, 300–301
 Bouncers 288
 Boxing Legends of the Ring 60, 70
 Boxxle 191, 258, 300
 Boxxle II 300
 Boxyboy 191, 258, 300
 Brain Bender 300
 Brain Drain 300
 Bram Stoker's Dracula 60, 288, 300
 Bravoman 258
 Breakout 4, 83, 186, 241, 263, 299, 312
 BreakThru! 300
 Brett Hull Hockey 60
 Brett Hull Hockey 95 60
 Brutal: Above the Claw 293
 Brutal: Paws of Fury 60, 288, 293
 Bubba 'N' Stix 61
 Bubble and Squeak 61
 Bubble Bobble 273, 300, 307, 309
 Bubble Bobble Part 2 300
 Bubble Bobble Revolution 274
 Bubble Ghost 300
 Bubble Memories 274
 Bubble Symphony 274
 Bubble Trouble 297
 Bubbles 240
 Bubsy In: Clawed Encounters of the Furred Kind 61, 70, 300
 Bubsy in Fractured Furry Tales 62
 Bubsy II 62, 300
 Bubsy 3D 62
 Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday 62–63
 Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom 104
 Budokan: The Martial Spirit 63
 Bug Blasters: The Extermination 288
 The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 300
 The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 2 300
 Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble 63
 Bulls versus Blazers and the NBA Playoffs 64, 129, 151
 Bulls vs Lakers and the NBA Playoffs 64, 130, 151
 BurgerTime 300
 BurgerTime Deluxe 300
 Burning Fight 11, 285
 Burning Fists: Force Striker 288
 Burning Force 64
 Bust-A-Move 285
 Bust-A-Move 2: Arcade Edition 300
 Buster Bros. 295, 300
 Buster Busts Loose 223
 Cabal 22
 Cadash 64, 258
 Cadillacs and Dinosaurs: The Second Cataclysm 288
 Caesar's Palace 64–65, 300
 Cal. 50 Caliber-Fifty 65
 Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball 65
 Caliber .50 65
 California Games 65, 297
 California Games II 66
 Camp California 295
 Capcom vs. SNK 29
 Capcom vs. SNK Pro 29
 Capcom vs. SNK 2: EO 29
 Captain America and the Avengers 3, 66, 300
 Casino Fun Pack 300
 Casper 300
 Castelian 300
 Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse 66–67, 95, 110, 244
 Castlevania 60, 68, 236–237, 300, 303
 Castlevania II 272
 Castlevania II: Belmont's Revenge 300
 The Castlevania Adventure 300
 Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow 67
 Castlevania: Bloodlines 67
 Castlevania: Dracula X 67
 Castlevania Legends 300
 Castlevania: Symphony of the Night 67
 Catrap 301
 Caveman Ninja 121–122
 Centipede 45, 299, 301
 Centurion: Defender of Rome 67
 Chakan: The Forever Man 68

- Champions Forever Boxing 258
 Champions World Class Soccer 68
 Championship Bowling 69
 Championship Pool 69, 301
 Championship Pro-Am 69, 182
 Championship Rally 297
 Championship Soccer '94 288
 The Chaos Engine 194
 Chase H.Q. 69, 259, 301
 Chase H.Q. II 69–70, 259
 Chavez 70
 Chavez II 70
 Checkered Flag 297
 Chelnov: Atomic Runner 48
 The Chessmaster 301, 305
 The Chessmaster 2000 301
 Chester Cheetah: Too Cool to Fool 70
 Chester Cheetah: Wild Wild Quest 70
 Chew Man Fu 259
 Chi Chi's Pro Challenge Golf 70
 Chiki Chiki Boys 71
 China Warrior 259
 Chip's Challenge 297
 Choplifter 207, 301
 Choplifter II 301
 Chuck Rock 71, 288, 301
 Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck 71, 289
 Citizen X 289
 Clay Fighter 72
 Clay Fighter 63 1/3 72
 Clay Fighter: Sculptor's Cut 72
 Clay Fighter: Tournament Edition 72
 Cliffhanger 72, 289, 301
 Clue 72
 Coach K College Basketball 72
 Cobra Command 289, 316
 College Football USA 96 73
 College Football USA 97: The Road to New Orleans 73
 College Football's National Championship 73
 College Football's National Championship II 73
 College Slam 74, 301
 Color a Dinosaur 47
 Columns 74–75, 140, 192, 228, 291
 Columns II: The Voyage Through Time 75
 Columns III: Revenge of Columns 74–75
 Columns Crown 75
 Combat Cars 75
 Comix Zone 75
 Commando 23, 65, 77, 141, 175, 256, 296
 Contra 12, 19–20, 75, 82, 111, 141, 143, 207–208, 219, 232–233, 256, 285, 305, 318
 Contra III: The Alien Wars 75
 Contra 4 76
 Contra: Hard Corps 67, 75–76, 141, 143
 Contra: Legacy of War 76
 Contra: The Alien Wars 301
 Cool Spot 76, 202, 301
 Cool World 301
 Corporation 78
 Corpse Killer 289
 Corpse Killer (CD) 293
 Cosmic Ark 250
 Cosmic Avenger 264
 Cosmic Carnage 293
 Cosmic Fantasy 2 295
 Cosmic Spacehead 76
 Cosmo Gang: The Puzzle 160
 CosmoTank 301
 Cotton: Fantastic Night Dreams 295
 Crack Down 76
 CraterMaze 260
 Crime Patrol 289
 Crossed Swords 11, 32, 285
 Crossed Swords 2 11
 CrossFire 76–77
 Crüe Ball: Heavy Metal Pinball 77, 87
 Crusader of Centy 77–78
 Crusaders of Might and Magic 144
 Crystal Mines 94, 123, 297
 Crystal Mines II 297
 Crystal Quest 301
 Crystal's Pony Tale 78
 Cutthroat Island 78, 301
 Cyber-Cop 78, 79
 Cyber-Core 260
 Cyber-Lip 11, 285
 Cyberball 78
 Cyberball 2072 78
 Cyborg Justice 79
 Cyraid 301
 Daedalian Opus 301
 Daffy Duck 301
 Darius 185
 Darius II 185
 Darius Gaiden 185
 Darius Twin 185
 Dark Castle 79
 Dark Wizard 289
 Darkman 301
 Darkwing Duck 260, 301
 Dashin' Desperadoes 80
 David Crane's Amazing Tennis 80
 David Crane's The Rescue of Princess Blobette 301
 David Robinson's Supreme Court 80
 Davis Cup Tennis 80, 260–261
 Days of Thunder 301
 Dead Heat Scramble 301
 Dead Moon 261
 Deadly Moves 81
 The Death and Return of Superman 81, 211
 Death Duel 81–82
 Decapattack 82
 Deep Blue 261
 Defender 239, 264, 299, 320
 Defender II 239
 Defenders of the Crown 296
 Demolition Man 82, 289
 Dennis the Menace 301
 Desert Demolition Starring Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote 82
 Desert Strike Advance 232
 Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf 53, 82, 125, 187, 232, 297, 301, 303
 Devilish 83
 Devilish: The Next Possession 83
 Devil's Crush 87, 254, 261–262, 280
 Dexterity 301
 Dick Tracy 83, 301
 Dick Vitale's "Awesome, Baby!" College Hoops 83
 Dig Dug 301, 305, 316
 Dino Land 83–84
 Dinolympics 297
 Dinosaurs for Hire 84
 A Dinosaur's Tale 84
 Dirt Trax FX 127
 Dirty Larry: Renegade Cop 297
 Disney's Magical Quest 2 Starring Mickey & Minnie 110
 Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald 110
 Dizzy the Adventurer 96
 DJ Boy 85
 Dr. Franken 301
 Dr. Franken II 301
 Dr. Mario 85, 301
 Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine 85, 195
 Dodge 'Em 306
 Donkey Kong 301, 313, 321
 Donkey Kong Country 142, 233, 301
 Donkey Kong Country Competition Edition 58
 Donkey Kong Land 301
 Donkey Kong Land 2 301
 Donkey Kong Land III 301
 Doom 248, 293
 Doom Troopers: Mutant Chronicles 85, 86
 Double Dragon 22, 24, 53, 79, 86, 108, 111, 201, 283, 285, 292, 297, 301
 Double Dragon II 301
 Double Dragon II: The Revenge 86
 Double Dragon 3: The Arcade Game 86, 301
 Double Dragon 3: The Rosetta Stone 86, 301
 Double Dragon V: The Shadow Falls 86
 Double Dragon Advance 24, 86
 Double Dribble 86–87, 279, 301
 Double Dribble 5 on 5 301
 Double Dribble: The Playoff Edition 86–87
 Double Dungeons 262
 Double Switch 289
 Dracula the Undead 297
 Dracula Unleashed 289
 Dragon Slayer: The Legend of Heroes 295
 Dragon Spirit 252, 262
 Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story 87
 DragonHeart: Fire & Steel 301
 Dragon's Curse 262
 Dragon's Fury 87
 Dragon's Lair 289, 291–292, 316
 Dragon's Lair: The Legend 301
 Dragon's Revenge 87, 262
 Drop Off 263
 DuckTales 301
 DuckTales 2 301
 The Duel: Test Drive II 87–88
 Dune 289
 Dune: The Battle for Arrakis 88
 Dune II: The Building of a Dynasty 88

- Dungeon Explorer 263, 289, 295
 Dungeon Explorer II 295
 Dungeon Master 272, 295
 Dungeon Master II: Skullkeep 289
 Dungeon Master: Theron's Quest 295
 Dungeons & Dragons: Warriors of the Eternal Sun 88
 Dynamite Duke 22, 88
 Dynamite Headdy 88
 The Dynastic Hero 295
- Earnest Evans 88–89, 91
 Earth Defense 89
 Earthworm Jim 89, 142, 158, 289, 301, 318
 Earthworm Jim 2 90
 Earthworm Jim 3D 90
 Earthworm Jim: Menace 2 the Galaxy 90
 Earthworm Jim: Special Edition 37, 90, 289
 Ecco Jr. 90–91
 Ecco the Dolphin 46, 90–91, 289
 Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future 90
 Ecco: The Tides of Time 91, 289
 Eightman 12
 El Viento 89, 91
 Electrocop 297
 Elemental Master 91
 Elevator Action 301
 Elvira and the Party Monsters 298
 ESPN Baseball Tonight 91, 289
 ESPN National Hockey Night 92, 289
 ESPN NBA Hang Time '95 289
 ESPN Speedworld 92
 ESPN Sunday Night NFL 92, 289
 E-SWAT 93
 ESWAT: City Under Siege 92
 ESWAT: Cyber Police 93
 E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial 189
 Eternal Champions 93, 247, 289
 Eternal Champions: Challenge from the Darkside 93, 289
 European Soccer Challenge 297
 Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal" Boxing 93, 110
 Exile 93, 295
 Exile: Wicked Phenomenon 93, 295
 Ex-Mutants 93–94
 Exodus: Journey to the Promised Land 94, 123, 301
 ExoSquad 94
 Extra Bases 301
 Eye of the Beholder 88
- F1 Pole Position 301
 F1 Race 301
 F-15 Strike Eagle 94, 301
 F-15 Strike Eagle II 94
 F-15 Strike Eagle III 94
 F-22 Interceptor 95
 F-117 Night Storm 95
 Faceball 2000 302
 The Faery Tale Adventure 95
 Fahrenheit 289
 Fahrenheit (CD) 293
 Falcon 264
 Family Feud 95, 315
- Fantasia 95
 The Fantastic Adventures of Dizzy 96
 Fantastic Dizzy 96
 Fantasy Zone 264, 313
 Fantasy Zone Gear 264
 Fastest Lap 302
 Fat Bobby 297
 Fatal Fury 7, 8, 12–15, 24, 25, 28, 29, 34, 96, 285–287
 Fatal Fury 2 12–13, 24, 96, 285
 Fatal Fury 3: Road to the Final Victory 12, 24, 96, 285
 Fatal Fury Battle Archives Vol. 1 12–13, 96
 Fatal Fury: King of Fighters 96
 Fatal Fury: Mark of the Wolves 14
 Fatal Fury Special 12–13, 96, 285, 289
 Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition 24
 Fatal Labyrinth 96
 Fatal Rewind 97
 Felix the Cat 302
 Ferrari Grand Prix Challenge 97, 302
 Fidelity Ultimate Chess Challenge 297
 The Fidgetts 302
 FIFA International Soccer 97, 185, 242, 289, 302
 FIFA: Road to World Cup 98 302
 FIFA Soccer 95 97
 FIFA Soccer 96 97–98, 302
 FIFA Soccer 97 98, 302
 Fighter's History 14
 Fighter's History Dynamite 14, 286
 Fighting Masters 98
 Fighting Simulator: 2 in 1 Flying Warriors 302
 Fighting Street 295
 Final Blow 119
 Final Fantasy 302
 Final Fantasy Adventure 302
 Final Fantasy Legend 302
 Final Fantasy Legend II 302
 Final Fantasy Legend III 302
 Final Fight 11, 25, 81, 168, 173, 186, 201, 205, 285–286, 289
 Final Fight CD 11, 37, 288–289
 Final Lap 264–265
 Final Lap 2 265
 Final Lap 3 265
 Final Lap R 265
 Final Lap Twin 264–265
 Final Lap UR 264
 Final Soldier 278
 Final Zone 98
 Final Zone II 99, 295
 Fire 302
 Fire Shark 98, 229–230
 Fish Dude 302
 Fist of the North Star 130
 Fist of the North Star: 10 Big Brawls for the King of the Universe 302
 The Flash 302
 Flashback: The Quest for Identity 99, 106, 289
 Flicky 99, 100
 Flink 289
 The Flintstones 100, 302
 The Flintstones: King Rock Treasure Island 302
- Flipull 302
 Football Frenzy 13, 286
 Foreman for Real 100, 302
 Forgotten Worlds 100, 295
 Formula One 101
 Formula One World Championship: Beyond the Limit 289
 Fortified Zone 302
 Fortress of Fear: Wizards & Warriors X 302
 4-in-1 Fun Pak 302
 4-in-1 Fun Pak: Volume II 302
 Four Trax 173
 Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball 101, 302
 Frog Bog 289
 Frog Feast 289
 Frogger 102, 302
 Frogger II 102
 Frogger II: Threedeep! 102
 Frogger Beyond 102
 Front Line 23, 142
 Fun 'N' Games 102
 Funny World 102
 Funny World/Balloon Boy 102
- G. Darius 185
 G-LOC: Air Battle 107
 Gadget Twins 102–103
 Gaiates 42, 47, 103, 194, 261, 296, 320
 Gain Ground 103–104
 Galaga 265, 273, 299
 Galaga '88 265
 Galaga '90 4, 252, 265
 Galaga: Destination Earth 266
 Galahad 104
 Galaxian 299
 Galaxy Fight: Universal Warriors 13, 286
 Galaxy Force II 104
 Game & Watch Gallery 302
 A Game of Concentration 313
 The Game of Harmony 302
 The Games: Summer Challenge 207
 The Games: Winter Challenge 240
 Garfield: Caught in the Act 104
 Gargoyles 105
 Gargoyle's Quest 302
 Garou: Mark of the Wolves 14, 25
 Gate of Thunder/Bonk's Adventure/Bonk's Revenge 296
 Gates of Zendocon 297
 Gauntlet 46, 103, 104–105, 263
 Gauntlet II 302
 Gauntlet IV 105
 Gauntlet Legends 106
 Gauntlet: The Third Encounter 106, 297
 Gear Works 302
 Gemfire 106
 General Chaos 106
 Generations Lost 106
 Genghis Khan 106
 Genghis Khan II: Clan of the Gray Wolf 106, 237
 George Foreman's KO Boxing 107, 302
 The Getaway 216
 The Getaway: High Speed 2 302
 Ghost Manor 266

- Ghost Pilots 14, 286
 Ghostbusters 107
 Ghostbusters II 302
 Ghosts 'N Goblins 107, 302
 Ghoul's'n Ghosts 3, 36, 107, 236
 Go! Go! Tank 302
 Goal! 302
 GODS 108
 Godzilla 296, 302
 Golden Axe 3, 38, 108, 187, 192, 269–270, 291
 Golden Axe II 108
 Golden Axe III
 Golden Axe: Beast Rider 108
 Golden Axe: Return of Death Adder 108
 Golden Axe: The Duel 108
 Golden Axe Warrior 108
 Golf 302
 Golf Magazine Presents 36 Great Holes Starring Fred Couples 293
 Goofy's Hysterical History Tour 108–109
 Gordo 106 297
 Gradius 9, 103, 113, 182, 198, 221, 273, 286, 305
 Gradius: The Interstellar Assault 302
 Granada 109
 Grand Theft Auto 323
 Grand Theft Auto III 216
 Gravitator 207
 The Great Circus Mystery Starring Mickey & Minnie 109–110
 Great Greed 302
 The Great Waldo Search 110
 Greatest Heavyweights 110
 Greendog: The Beached Surfer Dude! 110
 Gremlins 2: The New Batch 302
 Grind Stormer 110
 Ground Zero Texas 289
 Growl 111
 Guitar Hero 317
 Gumshoe 161
 Gun Fight 4
 Gunboat 266
 Gunstar Heroes 3, 88, 111, 133, 140–141, 207–208, 275
 Gunstar Super Heroes 111
 Gyruss 273

 HAL Wrestling 302
 Hammerin' Harry 302
 Hang On 24, 179, 209, 235, 286
 Hang On & Astro Warrior 209
 Hang On & Safari Hunt 209
 Happy Trails 124–125
 Hard Drivin' 111–112, 174, 297
 Hardball! 42, 112
 Hardball II 42, 112
 Hardball 5
 Hardball 6 112
 Hardball '94 42, 112
 Hardball '95 112
 Hardball 99 112
 Harvest Moon 302
 Harvest Moon GB 302
 Hatris 302
 Haunting Starring Polterguy 112–113
 Head On 306
 Head-On Soccer 113
 Heart of the Alien: Out of this World Parts I and II 289
 Heavy Barrel 143
 Heavy Nova 113
 Heavyweight Championship Boxing 302
 Heiankyo Alien 303
 Heimdall 289
 Hellfire 42, 113–114
 Hercules 303
 Herzog Zwei 114
 High Seas Havoc 114
 High Stakes Gambling 303
 Hit the Ice 114, 266, 303
 Hockey 46, 297
 Hogan's Alley 132
 Home Alone 114, 303
 Home Alone 2: Lost in New York 115, 303
 Hook 115, 289, 303
 Hudson Hawk 303
 The Humans 115, 303
 The Humans: Meet the Ancestors! 115
 The Hunchback of Notre Dame 303
 The Hunt for Red October 303
 Hydride 209
 Hydra 297
 Hyper Lode Runner 303
 Hyperdome 298

 Ikari Warriors 15, 23, 65, 141, 175, 193, 256, 296
 IMG International Tour Tennis 116
 The Immortal 116
 Impossamole 266–267
 In Your Face 303
 The Incredible Crash Dummies 116, 303
 The Incredible Hulk 116
 Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade 116–117, 303
 Infection 307
 InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Berlitz French Translator 303
 InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Berlitz Spanish Translator 303
 InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Frommer's Travel Guide 303
 InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Personal Organizer and Phone Book 303
 InfoGenius Productivity Pak: Spell Checker and Calculator 303
 Insector X 117, 260
 Instruments of Chaos Starring Young Indiana Jones 117
 International Superstar Soccer 303
 Iron Helix 289
 Iron Man/X-O Manowar in Heavy Metal 303
 Ishido: The Way of Stones 117, 298, 303
 It Came from the Desert 296
 Itchy & Scratchy in Miniature Golf Madness 303
 Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off Road 210, 308
 Izzy's Quest for the Olympic Rings 117–118

 Jack Nicklaus Golf 118, 303
 Jack Nicklaus' Power Challenge Golf 118
 Jack Nicklaus' Turbo Golf 118, 267, 296
 Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu 267
 Jaguar XJ220 289
 James Bond 007 303
 James Bond 007: The Duel 118
 James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing 119
 James Pond: Codename RoboCod 119
 James Pond II — Codename: RoboCod 119
 James Pond 3: Operation Starfish 119
 James Pond: Underwater Agent 119
 Jammit 120
 Jeep Jamboree 303
 Jennifer Capriati Tennis 120
 Jeopardy! 120–121, 289, 303
 Jeopardy! Deluxe Edition 120
 Jeopardy! Platinum Edition 303
 Jeopardy! Sports Edition 121, 303
 Jeopardy! Teen Edition 303
 Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl 121
 The Jetsons: Robot Panic 303
 Jewel Master 121
 Jimmy Connors Tennis 298
 J.J. & Jeff 267
 Joe & Mac 121, 303
 Joe & Mac 2: Lost in the Tropics 122
 Joe & Mac Returns 122
 Joe Montana Football 122, 155
 Joe Montana II Sports Talk Football 122, 155, 202
 Joe Montana's NFL Football 289
 John Madden Duo CD Football 296
 John Madden Football 38, 122, 155, 282
 John Madden Football '92 123
 John Madden Football '93 122–123, 155
 John Madden Football Championship Edition 122
 Jordan vs Bird 123
 Jordan vs Bird: One on One 123, 303
 Joshua and the Battle of Jericho 94, 123
 Joust 239, 298–299
 Judge Dredd 58, 123–124, 303
 Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-On-One 123, 149
 Junction 124–125
 The Jungle Book 124–125, 303
 Jungle Hunt 269
 Jungle Strike: The Sequel to Desert Strike 83, 125, 232, 303, 317
 Jr. Pac-Man 161
 Jurassic Park 125–126, 134, 289, 303
 Jurassic Park Part 2: The Chaos Continues 303
 Jurassic Park: Rampage Edition 126, 134
 Justice League Task Force 126–127

 Ka-Ge-Ki: Fists of Steel 127
 Kabuki Klash 286
 Kageki 127
 Kaizou Choujin Schbibinman 275

- Karnov 14
 Karnov's Revenge 14, 286
 Kato-chan & Ken-chan 267
 Kawasaki SuperBike Challenge 127
 Keio Flying Squadron 289
 Keith Courage in Alpha Zones 252, 267–268
 Ken Griffey Jr. Presents Major League Baseball 303
 Keystone Kapers 100
 Kid Chameleon 128
 Kid Dracula 303
 Kid Icarus 303
 Kid Icarus: Of Myths and Monsters 303
 Kid no Hore Hore Daisakusen 260
 Kids on Site 289
 Killer Instinct 303
 The Killing Game Show 97
 King James Bible 303
 King of Casino 268
 The King of Fighters 7–8, 13, 23, 28
 The King of Fighters '94 15–16, 286
 The King of Fighters '95 15, 286, 303
 The King of Fighters '96 15, 286
 The King of Fighters '97 15, 286
 The King of Fighters '98 15, 286
 The King of Fighters '99 15–16, 286
 The King of Fighters 2000 16
 The King of Fighters 2000/2001 16
 The King of Fighters 2001 16
 The King of Fighters 2002 16, 29
 King of the Monsters 17, 128
 King of the Monsters 2 17, 128, 286
 King Salmon: The Big Catch 128
 Kingdom Crusade 303
 King's Bounty: The Conqueror's Quest 128
 Kings of the Beach 277
 Kirby's Avalanche 85
 Kirby's Block Ball 304
 Kirby's Dream Land 304
 Kirby's Dream Land 2 304
 Kirby's Pinball Land 304
 Kirby's Star Stacker 304
 Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle 18, 28
 KLAX 129, 268, 298, 304
 Knight Quest 304
 Knuckles' Chaotix 293
 Kolibri 293
 Krazy Ace Miniature Golf 298
 Krusty's Fun House 129, 304
 Krusty's Super Fun House 129
 Kung Food 298
 Kung Fu 259
 Kung-Fu Master 304
 Kwik 299, 304

 Lakers versus Celtics and the NBA Playoffs 64, 129, 151, 215
 Lamborghini: American Challenge 304
 Landstalker 130, 133
 La Russa Baseball 95 129, 225
 Last Action Hero 130, 304
 Last Alert 296
 Last Battle 36, 130
 The Last Blade 18, 286
 The Last Blade 2 18, 286
 Last Resort 18, 286

 The Lawn Mower Man 130, 290
 Lazlo's Leap 304
 League Bowling 18, 286
 Legend of Hero Tonma 269
 Legend of the River King 304
 Legend of Wukong 131
 The Legend of Zelda 201, 252, 263, 271, 307, 317, 321
 The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past 77–78
 The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening 304
 The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 242
 The Legendary Axe 252, 269
 Legendary Axe II 252, 269–270
 Lemmings 115, 129, 131, 298, 303–304
 Lemmings 2: The Tribes 131
 Lemmings 3D 131
 Lemmings & Oh No! More Lemmings 131
 Lethal Enforcers 131–132, 290
 Lethal Enforcers I and II 132
 Lethal Enforcers II: Gun Fighters 132, 290
 Lethal Weapon 304
 Lexis 298
 LHX Attack Chopper 132
 Liberty or Death 132
 Light Crusader 130, 133
 Lightening Force: Quest for the Darkstar 133, 221
 Links: The Challenge of Golf 290
 Linus Spacehead 76
 Linus Spacehead's Cosmic Crusade 76
 The Lion King 133, 142, 304
 The Little Mermaid 304
 Loadstar: The Legend of Tully Bodine 290
 Lock N' Chase 304
 Loco-Motion 124, 125
 Lode Runner 260, 303
 Loom 296
 Looney Tunes 304
 Loopz 304
 Lords of the Rising Sun 296
 Lords of Thunder 290, 296
 The Lost Vikings 38, 115, 133, 134
 The Lost Vikings 2
 The Lost World: Jurassic Park 126, 134, 304
 Lotus Turbo Challenge 134–135
 Lotus II 134–135
 Lunar: Eternal Blue 290
 Lunar Lander 186, 207
 Lunar: The Silver Star 290
 Lynx Casino 298

 M-1 Abrams Battle Tank 135
 Mad Dog McCree 290
 Mad Dog II: The Lost Gold 290
 Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior 160
 Madden 95 304
 Madden 96 304
 Madden 97 304
 Madden NFL '94 56, 123, 135
 Madden NFL 95 135
 Madden NFL 96 73, 135, 136
 Madden NFL 97 136

 Madden NFL 98 136
 Madden NFL 99 136
 Magical Chase 252, 270
 Magical Dinosaur Tour 296
 Magical Drop II 286
 The Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse 109
 Magician Lord 19, 286
 Mahjong Kyo Retsuden 286
 Make My Video: INXS 290
 Make My Video: Kriss Kross 290
 Make My Video: Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch 290
 Malibu Beach Volleyball 304
 Malibu Bikini 298
 Mallet Legend's Whac-A-Critter 136
 Manhole 302
 Maniac Mansion 187
 Mansion of Hidden Souls 290
 Mappy 100
 Marble Madness 137, 304
 Marble Madness/KLAX 137
 Mario Andretti Racing 137
 Mario Andretti's Indy Car Challenge 137
 Mario Andretti's World GP 137
 Mario Bros. 100
 Mario Lemieux Hockey 138, 155
 Mario Paint 47, 236
 Mario Strikers Charged 170
 Mario's Picross 304
 Marko 138, 290
 Marsupilami 138
 Maru's Mission 304
 Marvel Land 138
 Marvel Super Heroes 126
 Mary Shelley's Frankenstein 139
 Mary Shelley's Frankenstein/Bram Stoker's Dracula 290
 The Masked Rider: Kamen Rider ZO 290
 Master of Monsters 139
 Math Blaster! 140
 Math Blaster Episode 1 139–140
 Math Blaster in the Prime Adventure 140
 Matrimlee 19
 Mattel Auto Race 313
 Maui Mallard in Cold Shadow 304
 Mazin Saga Mutant Fighter 140
 Mazinger Z 140
 McDonald's Treasure Land Adventure 140
 MechWarrior 53
 Mega Bomberman 3, 140
 Mega Man 258, 275, 304
 Mega Man 2 304
 Mega Man II 304
 Mega Man 3 21, 304
 Mega Man III 304
 Mega Man 4 304
 Mega Man IV
 Mega Man V
 Mega Man: Dr. Wiley's Revenge
 Mega Turricon 141, 230, 281
 Megalith 304
 MegaRace 290
 Menacer 6-Game Cartridge 141
 Mercenary Force 304
 MERCS 141
 Metal Head 293

- Metal Masters 304
 Metal Slug 12, 19, 21, 29, 33, 285–286
 Metal Slug: 1st Mission 21
 Metal Slug 2 20–21, 286
 Metal Slug 3 20–21
 Metal Slug 4 21
 Metal Slug 4/Metal Slug 5 21
 Metal Slug 5 21
 Metal Slug 6 21
 Metal Slug 7 21
 Metal Slug Advance 21
 Metal Slug X 20–21
 Metal Slug XX 21
 Metroid 141, 230, 242, 281, 304, 317
 Metroid II: Return of Samus 304
 Michael Jackson's Moonwalker 142
 Michael Jordan: Chaos in the Windy City 138
 Mick & Mack as the Global Gladiators 142
 Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse 37, 110, 142, 290
 Mickey Mouse: Magic Wands! 304
 Mickey's Dangerous Chase 304
 Mickey's Ultimate Challenge 142, 304
 Micro Machines 75, 143, 271, 304
 Micro Machines I and 2: Twin Turbo 143
 Micro Machines 64 Turbo 143
 Microcosm 290, 292
 Midnight Raiders 290
 Midnight Resistance 86, 141, 143
 MiG-29 Fighter Pilot 143
 Might and Magic Book One: The Secret of the Inner Sanctum 144
 Might and Magic III: Isles of Terra 296
 Might and Magic: Gates to Another World 144
 Might & Magic: The Secret of the Inner Sanctum
 Mighty Mighty Missile! 290
 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers 144, 290, 304
 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie 144, 304
 Mike Ditka Power Football 144
 Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! 107
 Military Madness 270
 Millipede 299
 Milon's Secret Castle 304
 Miner 2049er 305
 Minnesota Fats: Pool Legend 144
 The Miracle Piano Teaching System 145, 317
 Missile Command 45, 299, 305
 Mr. Chin's Gourmet Paradise 305
 Mr. Do! 305, 316
 MLB Slugfest 150
 MLBPA Baseball 145
 Mole Mania 305
 Moley Christmas 267
 Monopoly 145, 305
 Monster Lair 242, 296
 Moon Patrol 318
 Mortal Kombat 2, 26–27, 37, 51, 60, 63, 93, 98, 144–146, 169–170, 222, 246, 290, 293–294, 305, 309, 311, 320
 Mortal Kombat I and II 305
 Mortal Kombat II 37, 146, 293, 305
 Mortal Kombat 3 146, 230, 305
 Mortal Kombat 4 231
 Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe 127, 231
 Moto Roder 75, 271
 Motocross Championship 293
 Motocross Maniacs 305
 Mouse Trap Hotel 305
 Ms. Pac-Man 3, 146–147, 161, 298, 305
 Ms. Pac-Man: Maze Madness 147
 Muhammad Ali Heavyweight Boxing 147, 305
 Mulan 305
 MUSH! 147–148, 291
 Mutant League Football 148
 Mutant League Hockey 148
 Mutation Nation 21–22, 286
 My Paint: The Animated Paint Program 290
 Mystery 305
 Mystic Defender 148
 Mystical Fighter 148–149
 Mystical Ninja starring Goeman 305
 Nail 'n Scale 305
 Nam-1975 22, 286
 Navy Seals 305
 NBA Action 149
 NBA Action '94 149
 NBA Action '95 Starring David Robinson 149
 NBA Action 98 149
 NBA All-Star Challenge 149, 305
 NBA All-Star Challenge 2 149, 305
 NBA HangTime 149
 NBA Jam 30, 50, 74, 114, 149, 150, 287, 289–290, 301, 305
 NBA Jam T.E. 74, 305
 NBA Jam Tournament Edition 37, 58, 150, 294, 305
 NBA Live 72, 130, 151, 305
 NBA Live 95 150–152
 NBA Live 96 151, 305
 NBA Live 97 151
 NBA Live 98 151
 NBA Live 2006 151
 NBA Maximum HangTime 150
 NBA Showdown 152
 NBA Showdown '94 150–151
 NCAA Basketball 83
 NCAA Final Four Basketball 152
 NCAA Football 152
 Nectaris: Military Madness 271
 Nemesis 305
 Neo Contra 76
 Neo DriftOut: New Technology 286
 Neo Turf Masters 22, 33, 286
 Neutopia 252, 271
 Neutopia II 252
 New Adventure Island 271
 The New Chessmaster 305
 New Dig Dug 301
 New Horizons 152, 231
 Newman-Haas IndyCar featuring Nigel Mansell 152–153
 NFL Blitz 150
 NFL Football 298, 305
 NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Montana 73–74, 153, 155
 NFL Football Trivia Challenge 290
 NFL '95 153, 171
 NFL 98 153, 171
 NFL Quarterback Club 154, 294, 305
 NFL Quarterback Club II 155, 305
 NFL Quarterback Club 96 154, 305
 NFL Quarterback Club 97 154–155
 NFL Quarterback Club 98 155
 NFL Quarterback Club 99 155
 NFL Quarterback Club 2000 155
 NFL Sports Talk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana 122, 153, 155
 NFL's Greatest: San Francisco vs. Dallas 1978–1993 290
 NHL '94 155, 157, 290
 NHL 95 92, 155–156, 217, 305
 NHL 96 156, 305
 NHL 97 156
 NHL 98 156
 NHL 99 157
 NHL 2000 157
 NHL All-Star Hockey 95 155
 NHL Hitz 150
 NHL Hockey 38, 155, 157
 NHL Hockey 95 305
 NHLPA Hockey 155
 NHLPA Hockey 93 155, 157
 Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing 157, 305
 Night Creatures 272
 Night Trap 2, 289–290
 Night Trap (CD) 294
 1942 14, 99, 285
 The Ninja 23
 Ninja Boy 305
 Ninja Boy 2 305
 Ninja Combat 22, 286
 Ninja Commando 23, 286
 Ninja Gaiden 270, 272, 298, 305
 Ninja Gaiden II 272
 Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom 298
 Ninja Gaiden Shadow 305
 Ninja Master's 23, 286
 Ninja Spirit 269, 272
 Ninja Taro 305
 Nintendo World Cup 305
 NIV Bible & The 20 Lost Levels of Joshua 305
 No Escape 157
 Nobunaga's Ambition 157, 305
 Nobunaga's Ambition II 157
 Nobunaga's Ambition: Iron Triangle 157
 Nobunaga's Ambition: Lord of Darkness 157
 Nobunaga's Ambition: Rise to Power 157
 Normy's Beach Babe–O–Rama 157–158
 Norse by Norsewest: The Return of the Lost Vikings 134
 Novastorm 290
 Nuclear Strike 232
 Nuclear Strike 64 232
 Octopus 302
 Oddworld Adventures 305
 Oil Panic 302
 Olympic Gold: Barcelona '92 158

- Olympic Summer Games 305
 Olympic Summer Games: Atlanta 1996 158
 One-on-One 281, 303
 Onslaught 158
 The Ooze 158
 Operation C 305
 Operation Europe: Path to Victory 1939–45 159
 Operation Wolf 22
 Order of the Griffon 272
 Ordyné 252, 272–273
 Out of Gas 305
 Out of This World 159, 289
 Out Run 159, 259
 Out Run 2019 159
 Outlander 159–160
 OutRun 69, 159–160, 283
 OutRun 2 160
 OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast 160
 OutRunners 160
 Over Top 286

 Pac-Attack 160, 305
 Pac-in-Time 306
 Pac-Jr. 161
 Pac-Land 273, 298
 Pac-Man 161, 304–306, 311
 Pac-Man 2: The New Adventures 161
 Pac-Mania 161
 The Pagemaster 161, 306
 Panel Action Bingo 306
 Panic! 290
 Paperboy 161–162, 298, 306
 Paperboy 2 162, 306
 Parasol Stars: The Story of Bubble Bobble III 252, 273
 Pat Riley Basketball 80, 162
 Pebble Beach Golf Links 163
 Pelé! 163
 Pelé II: World Tournament Soccer 163
 Pelé's Soccer 163
 Pengo 259
 Penguin Wars 306
 Pepper II 250
 Pete Sampras Tennis 163–164
 PGA European Tour 164–165, 306
 PGA Tour Golf 164, 274
 PGA Tour Golf II 164–165
 PGA Tour Golf III 165
 PGA Tour 96 165, 306
 PGA Tour 97 165
 PGA Tour 98 165
 Phantasy Star 38, 165, 191
 Phantasy Star II 165–166
 Phantasy Star III: Generations of Doom 165–166
 Phantasy Star IV: The End of the Millennium 166
 Phantasy Star Online 166
 Phantasy Star Portable 166
 Phantasy Star Universe 166
 Phantom 2040 166
 Phelios 166–167
 Pigskin 621 AD 121
 Pinball Construction Set 235
 Pinball Dreams 306
 Pinball Fantasies 306
 Pinball Jam 298
 Pink Goes to Hollywood 167–168

 Pinocchio 167, 306
 Pipe Dream 124, 280, 306
 Pirates! 168
 Pirates! Gold 168
 The Pirates of Darkwater 168
 Pit-Fighter 169, 298, 306
 Pitfall! 80, 124, 169, 172, 294
 Pitfall 3D: Beyond the Jungle 169
 Pitfall: Beyond the Jungle 169
 Pitfall: The Big Adventure 169
 Pitfall: The Lost Expedition 169
 Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure 169, 290, 294
 Planet Harriers 198, 277
 Play Action Football 306
 Pleasure Goal Street Soccer 5-on-5 286
 Pocahontas 169, 306
 Pokémon: Blue Version 306
 Pokémon: Red Version 306
 Pokémon: Yellow Version — Special Pikachu Edition 306
 Pole Position 180, 209, 264–265, 302
 Police Force 298
 Pong 2, 4, 34, 46, 241, 254, 298, 312, 318
 Popeye 100
 Popeye 2 306
 Popful Mail 290
 Populous 169–170, 230
 Populous DS 170
 Populous: The Beginning 170
 Power Factor 298
 Power Factory featuring C+C Music Factory 290
 Power Golf 274
 Power Instinct 19
 Power Mission 306
 Power Monger 170, 290
 Power Racer 306
 Power Spikes 2 286
 Powerball 170
 Predator 2 170–171
 Prehistorik Man 306
 Primal Rage 170–171, 294, 306
 Primal Rage II 171
 Prime Time NFL Starring Deion Sanders 153, 171
 Prince of Persia 171–172, 291, 296, 306
 Prince of Persia 2 172
 Prize Fighter 291
 Pro Quarterback 172
 Psycho Soldiers 15
 Psychosis 274
 P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations 172, 192
 P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations II 172
 P.T.O.: Pacific Theater of Operations IV 172
 Puggsy 172, 291
 Pulstar 286
 Punch-Out!! 11, 100, 226, 294
 The Punisher 173
 The Punisher: The Ultimate Payback 306
 Puyo Pop 74
 Puyo Puyo 85, 287
 Puzzled 286
 Pyramids of Ra 306

 Q Billion 306
 Q*bert for Game Boy 306
 Qix 231, 298, 306
 Qix II 231
 Qix Neo 231
 QuackShot Starring Donald Duck 173
 Quad Challenge 173
 Quarterback Attack with Mike Ditka 144
 Quarth 306
 Quattro Adventure 76

 R-Type 9, 18, 103, 113, 148, 221, 239, 252, 273, 275, 286, 307
 R-Type II 275
 R-Type III: The Third Lightning 275
 R-Type Final 275
 R-Types 275
 Race Days 306
 Race Drivin' 112, 174
 Racing Aces 291
 Radar Mission 306
 Radical Rex 174, 291
 Rage of the Dragons 19, 24
 Raging Fighter 306
 Ragnagard 286
 Raiden 174, 252, 274, 298
 Raiden II 175, 275
 Raiden III 175, 275
 Raiden IV 175, 275
 Raiden DX 275
 Raiden Fighters 175
 The Raiden Project 275
 Raiden Trad 174, 229, 274
 Rainbow Islands: The Story of Bubble Bobble 2 273
 Rambo First Blood Part II 23
 Rambo III 175
 Rampage 17, 298
 Rampart 175, 298, 306
 Ranger X 175, 207
 Rastan 57, 258, 269–270
 Rastan II 175
 Rastan Saga II 158, 175
 R.B.I. Baseball 176
 R.B.I. Baseball 2 176
 R.B.I. Baseball 3 176
 R.B.I. Baseball 4 176
 R.B.I. Baseball '93 176
 R.B.I. Baseball '94 176
 RBI Baseball '95 177, 294
 R.C. Pro-Am 69, 271
 RDF Global Conflict 291
 Real Bout Fatal Fury 13, 25, 286
 Real Bout Fatal Fury 2: The Newcomers 25, 286
 Real Bout Fatal Fury Special 24–25, 286
 The Real Ghostbusters 306
 Red Zone 177
 The Ren & Stimpy Show Presents: Stimpy's Invention 177
 The Ren & Stimpy Show: Space Cadet Adventures 306
 The Ren & Stimpy Show: Veediots! 306
 Resident Evil 278
 The Revenge of Shinobi 177, 187, 190–192, 291
 Revenge of the 'Gator 306

- Revenge of the Ninja 291
 Revengers of Vengeance 291
 Revolution X 177
 Richard Scarry's Busytown 178
 Riddick Bowe Boxing 306
 Riding Hero 24, 286
 Ring Rage 306
 Rings of Power 178
 Riot Zone 296
 Rise of the Dragon 291
 Rise of the Robots 98
 Risk 178
 Risky Woods 179
 Ristar 179
 Road Avenger 291
 Road Rash 3, 128, 179–180, 193, 291, 293, 306
 Road Rash II 179–180
 Road Rash 3 180
 Road Rash 3D 180
 Road Rash 64 180
 Road Rash: Jailbreak 180
 RoadBlasters 180, 298
 Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves 306
 Robo Aleste 148, 291
 Robo Army 24, 286
 Robo-Squash 298
 RoboCop 306
 RoboCop 2 307
 RoboCop 3 181
 RoboCop Versus The Terminator 181, 307
 Robotron: 2084 193, 210, 239–240, 249, 298
 Rock Band 317
 Rock N' Roll Racing 182
 Rocket Knight Adventures 182, 198–199
 Roger Clemens' MVP Baseball 182, 307
 Rolan's Curse 307
 Rolan's Curse 2 307
 Rolling Thunder 118, 183
 Rolling Thunder 2 183–184
 Rolling Thunder 3 183
 Rolo to the Rescue 184
 Romance of the Three Kingdoms 184, 237
 Romance of the Three Kingdoms II 184
 Romance of the Three Kingdoms III: Dragon of Destiny 184
 Romance of the Three Kingdoms IV: Wall of Fire 184
 Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI: Awakening of the Dragon 184
 Rugby World Cup 95 185
 The Rugrats Movie 307
 Ryygar 298

 Sagaia 185
 Saint Sword 185
 Samurai-Ghost 275
 Samurai Shodown 7, 18, 23, 26, 29, 186, 286, 290, 307
 Samurai Shodown II 26, 186, 286
 Samurai Shodown! 2 27
 Samurai Shodown III: Blades of Blood 26–27, 286
 Samurai Shodown IV: Amakusa's Revenge 27, 286
 Samurai Shodown V 27
 Samurai Shodown VI 27
 Samurai Shodown 64 27
 Samurai Shodown Anthology 27
 Samurai Shodown Sen 27, 186
 Samurai Shodown: Warriors Rage 27
 The San Diego Zoo Presents...The Animals! 291
 Sangokushi 184
 Saturday Night Slam Masters 186
 Saturn Bomberman 256
 Savage Reign 18, 27, 28, 286
 Scholastic's The Magic School Bus: Space Exploration Game 186
 Scooby-Doo Mystery 186
 Scramble 264
 Scrapyard Dog 298
 SD Valis 213
 seaQuest DSV 187, 307
 The Secret of Monkey Island 291
 Sega Classics Arcade Collection 4-in-1 291
 Sega Classics Arcade Collection 5-in-1 291
 Sega Genesis Collection 108
 Sengoku 28, 286
 Sengoku 2 28, 286
 Sengoku 3 28–29
 Serpent 307
 Sesame Street Counting Cafe 187
 Sewer Shark 291
 Shadow Blasters 187
 Shadow Dancer 177
 Shadow Dancer: The Secret of Shinobi 177, 187–188, 191
 Shadow of the Beast 188, 296, 298
 Shadow of the Beast II 188, 291
 Shadow Squadron 294
 Shadowgate 295
 Shadowrun 188
 Shanghai 117, 189, 298, 307
 Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye 189, 321
 Shape Shifter 272, 296
 Shaq-Fu 98, 189, 307
 Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective 291, 296
 Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective Vol. II 291, 296
 Shining Force 189, 191, 227
 Shining Force II 190
 Shining Force III 190
 Shining Force CD 190, 291
 Shining Force EXA 190
 Shining Force Neo 190
 Shining in the Darkness 190
 Shinobi 177, 187, 190–191
 Shinobi II: The Silent Fury 177
 Shinobi III: Return of the Ninja Master 188, 190–191
 Shinobi Legions 191
 Shockman 275
 Shove It! ... The Warehouse Game 191, 258, 281, 300
 Sid Meier's Pirates! 152, 168
 Sid Meier's Pirates! Live the Life 168
 Side Arms Hyper Dyne 275
 Side Pocket 192, 307
 Silent Debuggers 275–276
 Silent Service 192
 Silpheed 291
 SimEarth: The Living Planet 296
 The Simpsons: Bart & the Beanstalk 307
 The Simpsons: Bart vs. The Jugger-nauts 307
 The Simpsons: Bart vs. The Space Mutants 192, 235
 The Simpsons: Bart's Nightmare 192, 235
 Sinistar 230, 239
 Sinistron 276
 6-Pak 192
 688 Attack Sub 192
 Skate or Die 307
 Skate or Die: Bad 'N Rad 307
 Skate or Die: Tour De Thrash 307
 Skeleton Krew 192
 Skitchin' 193
 Slam City with Scottie Pippen 291
 Slam City with Scottie Pippen (CD) 294
 Slaughter Sport 193
 Small Soldiers 307
 Smash T.V. 170, 210, 249, 309
 The Smurfs 307
 Snafu 241, 307
 Snatcher 291
 Sneaky Snakes 307
 SNK Arcade Classics, Vol. 1 8
 SNK vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS 29
 SNK vs. Capcom: SVC Chaos 29
 Snoopy's Magic Show 307
 Snow Brothers 307
 Soccer Brawl 29, 287
 Soccer Mania 307
 Socket 193
 The Software Toolworks' Star Wars Chess 291
 Sol-Deace 193
 Sol-Feace 194, 291
 SolarStriker 307
 Soldier Blade 276–278
 Soldiers of Fortune 194
 Solitaire FunPak 307
 Solomon's Club 307
 Solomon's Key 307
 Somer Assault 277
 Sonic 3D Blast 197, 202
 Sonic Adventure 195
 Sonic & Knuckles 194–195, 197
 Sonic Blast 197
 Sonic CD 37, 195, 288, 291
 Sonic Championship 197
 Sonic Chaos 195
 Sonic Classics 195
 Sonic Gems Collection 195
 Sonic Jam 195
 Sonic Labyrinth 195
 Sonic R 195
 Sonic Shuffle 195
 Sonic Spike World Championship Beach Volleyball 277–278
 Sonic Spinball 36, 195
 Sonic the Hedgehog 3, 37, 38, 40, 48, 61–62, 103, 114, 118, 128, 179, 192–193, 195–197, 249, 272, 291, 293, 310, 316
 Sonic the Hedgehog 2 3, 194–196
 Sonic the Hedgehog 3 3, 194, 197
 Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode I 195

- Sonic the Hedgehog Arcade 195
 Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection 38, 108
 Sorcerer's Kingdom 197
 Soulstar 291
 Soviet Strike 232
 Space Ace 291
 The Space Adventure 291
 Space Harrier 64, 197–198, 277, 294, 321
 Space Harrier II 36, 197–198
 Space Harrier 3-D 198
 Space Invaders 198–199, 307, 311
 Space Invaders '91 3, 198–199, 320–321
 Space Invaders '95 198
 Space Invaders DC 198
 Space Panic 260
 Spanky's Quest 307
 Sparkster 182, 198
 Speedball 199
 Speedball 2 307
 Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe 199
 Speedball 2100 199
 Speedy Gonzalez 307
 SpellCaster 148
 Spider-Man (Acclaim) 199
 Spider-Man (Sega) 200
 Spider-Man 2 307
 Spider-Man 3: Invasion of the Spider-Slayers 307
 Spider-Man/Venom: Maximum Carnage 200, 234
 Spider-Man: Web of Fire 37
 Spider-Man/X-Men: Arcade's Revenge 200–201, 307
 Spindizzy Worlds 96
 Spinmaster 29, 33
 Spiritual Warfare 201, 307
 Splash Lake 296
 Splatterhouse 201, 252, 277–278
 Splatterhouse 2 201, 278
 Splatterhouse 3 201, 278
 Sports Illustrated Championship Football & Baseball 307
 Sports Illustrated for Kids: The Ultimate Triple Dare 307
 Sports Illustrated Golf Classic 307
 Sports Talk Baseball 201, 244
 Spot Goes to Hollywood 76, 202
 Spot: The Cool Adventure 76, 307
 Spot: The Video Game! 76, 307
 Spud's Adventure 307
 Spy Hunter 180
 Spy vs. Spy 307
 Square Deal 307
 Stack Columns 75
 Stakes Winner 29–30, 287
 Stakes Winner 2 30
 Star Control 202
 Star Soldier 278
 Star Strike 291
 Star Trek: 25th Anniversary 307
 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine — Crossroads of Time 202
 Star Trek: Generations — Beyond the Nexus 307
 Star Trek: Starfleet Academy 294
 Star Trek: The Next Generation 307
 Star Trek: The Next Generation — Echoes from the Past 202–203
 Star Trek: The Next Generation — “Future's Past” 203
 Star Wars 308
 Star Wars Arcade 37, 294
 Star Wars: Rebel Assault 291
 Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back 308
 Starblade 291
 Starflight 203
 Stargate 239, 308
 StarGate 203, 308
 Steel Empire 204
 Steel Talons 204, 298
 Stellar-Fire 291
 Stop that Roach! 308
 StormLord 204
 Street Fighter 29, 288, 295
 Street Fighter II 8–9, 12, 14–15, 17, 23–24, 26, 27, 29, 34, 60, 63, 81, 86, 93, 96, 98, 126, 144, 146, 170, 186, 193, 205, 219, 243, 285–288, 293, 308, 311, 320
 Street Fighter II: Champion Edition 204
 Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition 204–205, 211
 Street Fighter II Turbo 205
 Street Fighter IV
 Street Fighter Alpha 29
 Street Hoop 30, 287
 Street Racer 308
 Street Smart 205
 Streets of Rage 3, 11, 22, 24, 38, 75, 79, 81, 149, 173, 192, 201, 205, 290–291, 296
 Streets of Rage 2 3, 205
 Streets of Rage 3 206
 Strider 19, 60, 206
 Strider 2 207
 Strider Returns: Journey from Darkness 206
 S.T.U.N. Runner 298
 Stunt Race FX 127
 Sub-Terrania 177, 207
 Summer Challenge 207
 Sumo Fighter 308
 Sunset Riders 3, 207–208
 Super Adventure Island 272
 Super Adventure Island II 272
 Super Air Zonk: Rockabilly Paradise 253, 296
 Super Airwolf 77
 The Super Aquatic Games Starring the Aquabats 45
 Super Asteroids & Missile Command 298
 Super Baseball 2020 30, 208, 287
 Super Battleship 208
 Super Battletank 308
 Super Battletank 2 208
 Super Battletank: War in the Gulf 208
 Super Black Bass 223
 Super Bowling 18, 69, 286
 Super Breakout 263
 Super Caesar's Palace 65
 Super Chase: Criminal Termination 70, 259
 Super Chase H.Q. 70, 259
 Super Cobra 264
 Super Columns 75
 Super Double Dragon 86
 Super Ghouls 'N Ghosts 107
 Super Hang-On 128, 192, 208–209, 228
 Super High Impact 209
 Super Hunchback 308
 Super Hydride 209
 Super James Pond 119
 Super Mario Bros. 29, 71, 100, 103, 120, 128, 196, 252, 272, 298, 304, 306, 317
 Super Mario Kart 288, 293, 308, 315
 Super Mario Land 308
 Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins 308
 Super Mario World 62, 120, 223, 308
 Super Monaco GP 49, 101, 209
 Super Off Road 210, 298, 308
 Super Punch-Out!! 70, 226
 Super Qix 231
 Super R-Type 275
 Super R.C. Pro-Am 308
 Super Scrabble Crossword Game 308
 Super Skweek 298
 Super Sidekicks 31, 287
 Super Sidekicks 2 31, 287
 Super Sidekicks 3: The Next Glory 31, 287
 Super Smash T.V. 210
 Super Space Invaders 198
 Super Space Invaders '91 198
 Super Sprint 210
 The Super Spy 11, 31, 287
 Super Star Soldier 276, 278
 Super Star Wars 204
 Super Star Wars: Return of the Jedi 308
 Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers 205, 210–211
 Super Street Fighter II Turbo 211
 Super Tennis 116, 120
 Super Thunder Blade 211
 Super Turrican 141, 230, 281
 Super Turrican 2 141, 230, 281
 Super Valis IV 213
 Super Volleyball 211, 278
 Superman 189, 211–212, 308
 Supreme Warrior 291
 Supreme Warrior (CD) 294
 Surgical Strike 291
 Surround 307
 Swamp Thing 308
 Switchblade II 298
 The Sword of Hope 308
 Sword of Hope II 308
 Sword of Sodan 212
 Sword of Vermilion 212
 Syd Mead's Terraforming 296
 Syd of Valis 213, 233
 Sylvester and Tweety in Cagey Capers 213
 Syndicate 213
 Syndicate Wars 213
 T-MEK 294
 T2: The Arcade Game 213–214, 308
 Tail 'Gator 308
 Takin' It to the Hoop 163, 279
 TaleSpin 214, 279, 308
 Tamagotchi 308

- Tapper 45
 Target Earth 214–215
 Tarzan: Lord of the Jungle 308
 Task Force Harrier 215
 Task Force Harrier EX 215
 Tasmania Story 308
 Taz in Escape from Mars 215
 Taz-Mania 215, 308
 Taz-Mania 2 308
 Team USA Basketball 215–216
 TechnoClash 216
 Technocop 216
 Tecmo Baseball 216
 Tecmo Bowl 216, 218, 308
 Tecmo NBA Basketball 217
 Tecmo Super Baseball 216
 Tecmo Super Bowl 152, 209, 216–217, 218
 Tecmo Super Bowl II: Special Edition 217
 Tecmo Super Bowl III: Final Edition 217
 Tecmo Super Hockey 217
 Tecmo Super NBA Basketball 217–218
 Tecmo World Cup 218
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: Back from the Sewers 308
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: Radical Rescue 308
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time 218
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan 308
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Hyperstone Heist 218–219
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Tournament Fighters 219
 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time 218
 Tempo 294
 Tennis 308
 The Terminator 219, 232, 291
 Terminator 2: Judgment Day 219, 308
 Tesserae 308
 Test Drive 87
 Tetris 58, 74, 129, 160, 175, 250, 268, 286, 299–302, 304–305, 308–310
 Tetris 2 269, 308
 Tetris Attack 308
 Tetris Blast 308
 Tetris Plus 308
 Tetrisphere 58
 Theme Park 219–220
 Third World War 292
 Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends 220
 Thrash Rally 32, 287
 3 Count Bout 32, 287
 3 Ninjas Kick Back 220
 3 Ninjas Kick Back/Hook 289
 Thrust 207
 Thunder Blade 211
 Thunder Force 42, 133, 194, 221, 320
 Thunder Force II 36, 113, 220–221
 Thunder Force III 47, 220–221, 261, 296
 Thunder Force IV 133, 221
 Thunder Force V: Perfect System 133
 Thunder Force AC 221
 Thunder Fox 221
 Thunder Spirits 133, 221
 The Tick 222
 Tiger-Heli 77, 99, 230
 Tiger Road 279
 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 165
 Time Cruise 280
 Time Gal 292
 Time Killers 222
 Timeball 124, 280
 Tinhead 222
 Tiny Toon Adventures: ACME All-Stars 222
 Tiny Toon Adventures: Babs' Big Break 308
 Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster's Hidden Treasure 223
 Tiny Toon Adventures: Wacky Sports 223, 308
 Tiny Toon Adventures 2: Montana's Movie Madness 308
 Titus the Fox 308
 TNN Bass Tournament of Champions 223
 TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96 223
 Todd's Adventures in Slime World 223, 298
 ToeJam & Earl 141, 224
 ToeJam & Earl in Panic on Funkotron 224
 ToeJam & Earl III: Mission to Earth 224
 Toki 224, 298
 Toki: Going Ape Spit 224
 Tom and Jerry 224, 309
 Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics 309
 Tom and Jerry: Frantic Antics! 224–225
 Tomcat Alley 290, 292
 Tommy Lasorda Baseball 36, 176, 225
 Tongue of the Fatman 193
 Tony La Russa Baseball 129, 225
 Top Gear 225
 Top Gear 2 225–226
 Top Gear 3000 226
 Top Gun: Guts & Glory 309
 Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy 32–33, 287
 Top Player's Golf 22, 33, 287
 Top Rank Tennis 309
 Torpedo Range 309
 Total Carnage 170, 309
 Toughman Contest 226, 294
 Tournament Cyberball 78, 298
 Tournament Cyberball 2072 78
 Tower Toppler 142
 The Toxic Avenger 226
 Toxic Crusaders 226, 309
 Toy Story 226, 309
 Toys 226–227
 Track & Field 158, 241, 309
 Track Meet 309
 Trampoline Terror! 227
 Trax 309
 Traysia 227
 Tricky Kick 280–281
 Triple Play 96 227
 Triple Play 97 227
 Triple Play 98 227
 Triple Play 99 227
 Triple Play 2000 227
 Triple Play Gold Edition 227
 Triple Score: 3 Games in 1 228
 Trivial Pursuit 292
 Trouble Shooter 228
 Troy Aikman NFL Football 228
 True Lies 228, 309
 Truxton 99, 229, 321
 Truxton II 229
 TumblePop 309
 Turbo Sub 298
 Turn and Burn: The F-14 Dogfight Simulator 309
 Turok: Battle of the Bionosaurs 309
 Turrican 141, 229, 232, 281, 309
 TV Sports Basketball 279, 281
 TV Sports Football 281
 TV Sports Hockey 282
 Twin Cobra 230
 Twin Cobra 2 230
 Twinkle Star Sprites 287
 Two Crude 230
 Two Crude Dudes 230
 Tyrants: Fight Through Time 230
 Ultima 178, 227, 309
 Ultima: Runes of Virtue 309
 Ultima: Runes of Virtue II 309
 Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 146, 230
 Ultimate Qix 231
 Ultra Golf 309
 Ultraverse Prime/Microcosm 292
 Uncharted Waters 152, 231
 Universal Soldier 232, 309
 Unnecessary Roughness '95 232
 Urban Strike: The Sequel to Jungle Strike 125, 232, 309
 USHRA Monster Truck Wars 309
 Utopia 319
 Valis 213, 232
 Valis II 296
 Valis III 213, 233, 296
 Vapor Trail 233
 Vapor Trail: Hyper Offence Formation 233
 Vasteel 296
 Vay 292
 VectorMan 38, 233
 VectorMan 2 233
 Vegas Dream 268
 Vegas Stakes 309
 Veigues Tactical Gladiator 282
 Venom/Spider-Man: Separation Anxiety 200, 233–234
 Victory Run 282–283
 El Viento 89, 91
 Viewpoint 33–34, 234, 287
 Vigilante 259, 283
 Viking Child 298
 Virtua Fighter 24, 37, 294
 Virtua Fighter 2 234
 Virtua Fighter 3 234
 Virtua Fighter 4 234
 Virtua Fighter 5 234
 Virtua Racing 234
 Virtua Racing Deluxe 37, 234, 294
 Virtual Bart 234
 Virtual Hydlide 209
 Virtual Pinball 235
 Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer 34, 287

- VR Troopers 235–236
 VR Virtua Racing 234

 Wacky Stackers 223
 Wacky Worlds Creativity Studio 236
 Wanted: Monty Mole 267
 Warbirds 298
 Wardner 236
 Wario Blast featuring Bomberman! 309
 Wario Land II 309
 Warlock 236
 WarpSpeed 237
 Warrior Blade: Rastan Saga Episode III 176
 Warrior of Rome 237
 Warrior of Rome II 237
 Warriors of Might and Magic 144
 Warsong 237
 Wave Race 309
 Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars 238
 Wayne's World 238, 309
 WCW: The Main Event — World Championship 309
 WeaponLord 238
 Welltris 58
 We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story 309
 Wheel of Fortune 238, 292, 309, 315
 Wheel of Fortune: Deluxe Edition 239
 Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego? 239
 Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego? 239
 Whip Rush 239
 Who Framed Roger Rabbit 309
 Who Shot Johnny Rock? 292
 Wild Woody 292
 WildSnake 309
 Will Harvey's Zany Golf 248
 Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits 46, 239
 Wimbledon Championship Tennis 48, 240
 Windjammers 34, 287
 Wing Commander 292
 Wings of Wor 240
 Winter Challenge 207, 240–241
 Winter Games 284
 Winter Olympic Games 241

 Winter Olympic Games: Lillehammer '94 309
 Wirehead 292
 Wiz 'n' Liz 241
 Wizardry 178, 272
 Wizards & Warriors 302
 Wolfchild 241, 292
 Wolfenstein 3D
 Wolverine: Adamantium Rage 241
 Wonder Boy 242
 Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap 242, 263
 Wonder Boy in Monster Land 242
 Wonder Boy in Monster World 242, 295
 Wonder Dog 292
 Wordtris 309
 WordZap 309
 World Bowling 309
 World Championship Soccer 228, 242
 World Championship Soccer II 242
 World Circuit Series 309
 World Class Baseball 283
 World Class Leader Board 243
 World Class LeaderBoard Golf 242–243
 World Class Soccer 298
 World Court Tennis 283
 World Cup 98 309
 World Cup USA 94 163, 243, 292
 World Heroes 10, 28, 34–35, 243, 287
 World Heroes 2 34–35, 243, 287
 World Heroes 2 Jet 34–35, 287, 309
 World Heroes Jet 243
 World Heroes Perfect 34, 243, 287
 World of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck 243–244
 World Series Baseball 244
 World Series Baseball '95 244–245
 World Series Baseball '96 245
 World Series Baseball 98 245
 World Series Baseball 2K1 245
 World Series Baseball 2K2 245
 World Series Baseball 2K3 245
 World Series Baseball Starring Deion Sanders 245, 294
 World Sports Competition 284
 World Trophy Soccer 245

 Wucorn Legend 131
 WWF King of the Ring 309
 WWF Rage in the Cage 292
 WWF Raw 245–246, 294, 309
 WWF Royal Rumble 245–246
 WWF Super WrestleMania 246
 WWF Superstars 309
 WWF Superstars 2 309
 WWF War Zone 310
 WWF WrestleMania 246
 WWF WrestleMania: The Arcade Game 246, 294

 X-Men 247
 X-Men 2: Clone Wars 247
 X-Perts 247
 Xenon 310
 Xenon 2 310
 Xenophobe 298
 Xevious 260
 Xin Qigai Wangzi 55
 Xybots 298

 Yo, Bro 284
 Yogi Bear's Gold Rush 310
 Yoshi 310
 Yoshi's Cookie 310
 Ys Book I & II 248, 296
 Ys III: Wanderers from Ys 247–248, 296
 Ys VI: The Ark of Napishtim 248
 Y's The Vanished Omens 248

 Zany Golf 248
 Zarlur Mercenary 298
 Zaxxon 33–34, 202, 234, 287, 294
 Zaxxon's Motherbase 2000 294
 Zelda II: The Adventure of Link 213
 Zen: Intergalactic Ninja 310
 Zenji 124
 Zero: The Kamikaze Squirrel 40, 248
 Zero Tolerance 248–249
 Zintrick 287
 Zombies Ate My Neighbors 249
 Zool: Ninja of the Nth Dimension 249, 310
 Zool 2 249
 Zoom! 249–250
 Zoop 250, 310